

EDA GEMI

INTEGRATION AND TRANSNATIONALISM IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE:

THE CASE OF ALBANIAN IMMIGRANTS IN VIENNA AND ATHENS

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Institut für Stadt- und Regionalforschung, Postgasse 7, A-1010 Wien

Telefon +43 1 51581/3520-3532

Telefax +43 1 51581/3533

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PREFACE

In a context of growing concern about the disruption of social cohesion in European cities, the debate on the future of integration models and various national and local integration strategies has earned particular attention both in academic and political terms. The policy discourse on the issue, as well as scholars themselves, tend to focus on countries' comparison of modes of integration, emphasizing their differences in relation to social outcome.

Meanwhile, adding the transnational perspective has contributed to redefining migrants' cognitive geographies and their pathways of integration and patterns of transnational mobility. The concept of transnationalism is widely used to depict the socio-economic formation spanning national borders, which involve simultaneous overlapping affiliations of persons to geographically separate polities (BAUBÖCK 2002, p. 5).

Exactly because of this, the transnational mobility of immigrants is clearly placed in the framework of the integration discourse, where national integration policies as well as citizenship regimes are considered as systemic opportunity structures that may encourage, discourage, or shape the degrees and types of immigrants' economic, political and social-cultural involvement in transnational activities. While transnationalism has contributed to redefining the concept of integration as a three-way process, it has hardly considered its effects on migrants' integration and vice versa. Similarly, the literature on migrant integration has paid little attention to the theoretical developments and inter-relations in these two fields.

This study seeks to bridge these areas by exploring the interrelated processes of integration and transnational practises of Albanian migrants, and by measuring outcomes. The specific aim is to identify the patterns of interaction under specific context-bound national and local conditions, and see how they shape the dynamics of the migration trajectory and mobility of Albanian migration in Austria and Greece. It is going to do so by applying a comparative cross-national and cross-local perspective, focusing on two (receiving) countries that represent different migration and integration regimes: Austria and Greece, particularly in two local metropolitan areas: Vienna and Athens.

The analytical approach is based on the argument that these complex processes take place within migration systems that connect countries and regions. The migration systems approach is mainly adopted as an analytical framework for the empirical research in Austria and Greece as well as a typological paradigm of the EU – Western

Balkans migration system. Disregarding the approach that considers migration as linear, unidirectional, push and pull, cause-effect movements, migration is here much rather understood as transnational, inter-connected, complex and self-modifying systems in which the effect of changes in one part can be traced through the entire system (FAIST 2010).

The study distinguishes between two different migration and integration policy regimes within the European Union (EU), namely those of Austria and Greece. Austria is part of the North-Western European regime, which evolved from guest-worker policies to national integration policies that recognize migrants as permanent citizens and, more recently, to policies that promote migrants' cultural integration. In this regard, Vienna is characterized as a promoter in terms of designing and implementing pro-active integration policies, taking advantage of its dual role as the capital of the country and as a single province under the federal system of government in Austria. Greece, on the other hand, is considered as a part of the Southern European migration and integration regime, characterized mainly by labour participation with a much lesser degree of welfare provision. The particular features of the Greek case are associated with the position of Athens within the wider national space. As a Southern European metropolis, the urban complex of Athens dominates in the system of Greek cities, both in demographic terms and in terms of socio-economic activities. These features in combination with the lack of a social welfare system leave greater space for the role of family and informal networks at local level. Despite the presence of a large number of migrants (compared to other urban areas), there are no tailor-made local policies focusing on integration at the local level, which is mostly attributed to the centralized system of government.

Given the differences between Austria and Greece (Vienna and Athens) in governance at national and local levels, by looking at integration processes the study wishes to shed more light on the ways in which particular migrant culture and migratory history on the one hand, and general public institutions and migration policies on the other, shape integration outcomes. Comparing between different countries enables us to understand not only local and regional policy responses, but also the relationship between the national, regional, and local levels within the same migration system. Most importantly, adopting cross-national and cross-local comparisons that examine the same migrant group in different national and local contexts is deemed to be useful in assessing the role of contextual factors (e.g., citizenship regimes and integration policies), adding further explanatory tools for conceptualizing differences in migrants' integration outcomes.

The study is a comprehensive synthesis of the author's research work on Albanian migration in Austria and Greece. It has two specific objectives. First, building on in-depth fieldwork in Athens and Vienna, it provides rich empirical insights into the Albanian experience of integration and transnational mobility, and frames it in the Austrian and Greek national and local contexts. Second, considering the limited pool of knowledge around the interaction between different forms of settlement (integration) and mobility

(transnationality) both in a time of crisis (Greece) and in a time of economic stability (Austria), it addresses issues relevant to theorizing and policy-making. It furthermore aims to explain the interconnection and complexities of migrants' livelihood and mobility strategies. It promises to bring new understanding into one of the most representative cases (in terms of statistics and migration patterns) in the EU-Western Balkans migration system that could have a significant added value for advancing knowledge on the subject.

Furthermore, comparing Albanian migration in Austria and Greece represents a specific, interesting case study for the following reasons:

- (a) Historical, political, economic, and cultural ties exist for both destination countries with Albania and Albanians (Austro-Hungarian Empire vis-a-vis Ottoman Empire).
- (b) In both destination countries, the largest migrant communities (third-country nationals) are from countries of the Western Balkans (Albanians in Greece; Serbs and Bosnians in Austria), qualifying our case study as representative in the context of the EU-Western Balkans migration system.
- (c) It compares the migration trajectory of the same migrant group in two different national and local contexts representing different governance models: a federal system (Austria) versus a centralized system (Greece).
- (d) It is the first study of Albanian migration that will address the dynamic interaction between integration and transnationalism and compare their outcome in two sets of countries:
 - Greece: a socio-politically and economically unstable country of the southern EU, recently hit by the economic recession and refugee crisis, with little experience in managing migration and integration, and sharing common borders with Albania.
 - Austria: an economically and politically stable country with a different migration and integration legacy, which represents the North-Western European regime.
 - Both countries – Greece and Austria – have a sound presence in the economic and cultural life of Albania.
- (e) It is the first study that explores the Albanian migration in Austria.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, the complexity of migration as a contemporary and global phenomenon reveals the variety of its national and regional realities along with the related historical background that defines and frames it. In Europe, the altering of the shape of migration that took place since the end of 1980s largely contributed to its re-conceptualization in the light of a new globalized, diversified and highly politicized environment. These factors turned migration into a new highly contested process. Rather than being systemized in line with a set of traditional typological patterns, contemporary migration displays a variety of fluctuating forms, modes and geographies that in fact affirms the urge to revise the existing categorical and binary sets of distinctions (i.e. temporary vs. permanent, low skilled vs. high skilled), directions, purposes, methodological approaches, and research tools.

Migration flows display a changing nature (i.e. mixed migration) and migrants may display persistence to reach particular countries of destination (i.e. Germany was seen as the promised land for more than a million of asylum seekers that made their way via the Balkan route during the refugee crisis in 2015-2016). This corroborates the existence of a complex set of factors that enable contemporary human mobility through the developing of networks and inventing of strategies (BOBIĆ and JANKOVIĆ 2017, p. 15). Furthermore, by making use of social networks, transnational ties and links with specific actors in countries of origin and destination, the migrants are able to activate their own agency.

Notwithstanding, although the very nature of contemporary migration has contributed to redefining the concept of integration, its effects on migrants' transnational mobility have hardly been considered. Similarly, the literature on migrants' transnational mobility has paid little attention to the theoretical developments and interrelations between these two processes. Traditionally, the migration narrative has viewed migrants' settlement as an end state and a static process based on the idea that once migrants have settled in the country of destination, migration becomes self-perpetuating because it creates the social and economic structures (e.g. networks) to sustain the process (CASTLES and MILLER 2009; MASSEY 1990; BAKEWELL et al. 2011, p. 6). This approach, however, pays little attention to the contextual dynamics unfolding both in receiving and in origin countries. These change the initial conditions under which migration takes place (DE HAAS 2010) and the role of migrants' agency in developing new strategies for responding to the continuously changing situation (GEMI 2014, p. 13).

Integration takes place in the context of a broad socio-economic process, in which people from different cultural backgrounds, who co-exist and interact within a common structure, are synchronised with different value systems, traditions and attitudes. This process involves the adaptation of both immigrants and the host society to a new social-economic context, the various parts of which are interrelated and interdependent. In reality, however, socio-economic relations between immigrants and the host society are established in the context of a socio-political system of institutions, narratives and hierarchies that grant exclusive privileges to the host country (ALBA and NEE 2011). In this way, the host society may selectively integrate certain population categories, keeping others in an extremely vulnerable and marginal position. It thus legitimises the construction of social categorisations and hierarchies through ideological and cultural references (VENTOURA 2011, p. 30). By doing so, it enables the binary distinction between the ‘strangers’ and the ‘citizens’ (BALIBAR 2012) through a complex interplay of exclusion, integration and tolerance (AMBROSINI 2015). In a way, policies adopted by the host country fabricate the institutional context by integrating or excluding certain categories of immigrants from social and political participation but also from economic and social advancement. These are the policies that contribute to the formation of national identity, giving individuals their legal identity and defining who has the right to what (VENTOURA 2011, p. 26). SOYSAL (1994) maintains that different integration policies are the outcome of different institutional contexts and perceptions concerning the status of membership in every nation state. These variations affect immigrants’ attitudes, because the relationship that has developed between immigrants and the host country at the both individual and collective levels is by definition dialectical.

In a context of growing concern about the prevalence of hate speech, the large number of violent incidents, conflicts and racially motivated murders has eroded social cohesion within European societies to an alarming degree. These developments, coupled with the rapid rise in unemployment due to the economic crisis and the prevalent insecurity, have turned immigrants into easy targets of xenophobic and racist attacks from extremist political parties, which, under the rubric of ‘national salvation’, perceive immigrants as the modern enemy. The ‘protection’ of the host society against the immigrant enemy is presented – in some cases – as the key political argument for claiming power (GEMI 2017). In European countries, there is a rise of anti-immigrant and extremist political parties that support racist ideologies. Until recently, the far-right Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) was part of the government coalition in Austria, while in Greece, the neo-Nazi party of Golden Dawn won 18 seats¹ in the 2015 national elections.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that the current socio-political environment is partly the result of a failure in the countries’ political systems to manage the phenomenon of migration effectively and to implement a fair policy for the integration of immigrants. Furthermore, the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments and political movements during the

¹ The results of the 2015 national election. In the national elections of 17th of June 2015, the Golden Dawn party lost each of its 18 seats.

years of the economic crisis (in particular in the Euro zone) has very much stalled the process of integration, while inhibiting the tolerance of the host societies as well as their democratic principles and values. In the light of these developments, the integration of immigrants along with the safeguarding of social cohesion in the European society has become a highly critical issue (GEMI 2017).

With the issue of integration reflecting the persistence of the connection between migrant integration and the nation state, conversely, the notion of transnationalism seems to transcend the earlier static assumptions in integration research, aiming at shedding light on the bonds and practices developed between individual, collective, and governmental actors located in two or more countries. It has been widely acknowledged that the transnational perspective has substantially changed the understanding of migrants' cognitive geographies, their pathways of integration, and their patterns of mobility (VATHI 2015, p. 117). The term 'transnationalism' is used to delineate social formations spanning national borders, such as transnationally active networks, groups and organizations (FAIST 2010, p. 9). These also involve the simultaneous overlapping affiliations of persons to geographically separate polities (BAUBÖCK 2002, p. 5).

In fact, the transnational mobility of immigrants is clearly placed in the framework of the integration discourse, where national integration policies as well as citizenship regimes are considered as systemic opportunity structures that may encourage, discourage, or shape the degrees and types of immigrants' economic, political and social-cultural involvement in transnational activities. Confirming this, PORTES (1999, p. 472) emphasizes the positive role of transnational activities in facilitating successful adaptation to the first generation. While transnationalism has contributed to redefining the concept of *integration*, it has hardly considered its effects on migrants' integration and vice versa. Similarly, the literature on migrants' integration has paid little attention to the theoretical developments and interrelations in these two fields. In the context of redefining the concept of *integration as a three-way process (country of destination, country of origin and migrant him/herself)*, the notions of integration and transnationalism have gained a prominent role in understanding the multiple trajectories of migrants. Cross-border movements as well as the emerging multicultural mosaic of the urban environment now seem to be permanent features of European societies.

With this problem in mind, this study seeks to identify the patterns of interaction between integration and transnationalism under specific context-bound national and local conditions and see how they shape the dynamics of migration trajectories of Albanian migrants. The aim is to investigate the interaction of processes related to integration and transnationalism and to identify the conditions under which these processes may affect each other. It will do so by applying a comparative cross-national and cross-local perspective, focusing on two (receiving) countries that represent different migration and integration regimes, Greece and Austria, particularly focusing on two local metropolitan areas: Athens and Vienna.

Our analytical approach is based on the argument that these complex processes take place within *migration systems* that connect countries and regions. We adopt the migration systems approach mainly as an analytical framework for our empirical research in Greece and Austria. It functions as a typological paradigm of an EU-Western Balkans migration system that takes into account the (a) heterogeneity and multiple dynamics of migration trajectories, (b) changes (e.g., economic crisis, stagnation) occurring in a migration system, and (c) the role of migrants' agency (vis-à-vis structure). By focusing on the diptych integration-transnationalism of Albanians through a comparative cross-national and cross-local lens, the study aspires to bring a new understanding to one of the most representative cases in the EU-Western Balkans migration system.

The methodology relies on the multifocal and multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork, which is based on 30 interviews conducted in two phases with stakeholders and key informants in 2016, in Athens, Greece (15) and in 2018 in Vienna, Austria (15).

The book is divided into three chapters. The first chapter revolves around the theoretical rationale of concepts: integration and transnationalism, analysing them in the light of a migration systems framework. The second chapter focuses on the particular case of Albanian migration in Austria and Greece, viewing it as a representative case study of the EU-Western Balkans migration system. By comparing Austria (as part of the North-West migration regime) and Greece (belonging to the Southern European migration regime), it aims to shed light on the multilevel governance of migration and integration at federal, national and local level as well as on its outcomes. The empirical findings will provide in-depth insights on the interaction of the diptych of integration and transnationalism. The last chapter attempts to revisit the theoretical rationale employed, embedded in a tailor-made typology, which is interpreted in the light of the empirical findings.

1 Rationale and theoretical considerations

1.1 *Migration System Theory: the case of the EU-Western Balkans migration system*

For obvious reasons, the attempt to tie together different aspects of migration such as integration and transnationalism – that links the origin and destination countries – needs a clearly elaborated analytic framework. In addressing the issue, our approach is based on the argument that these complex processes take place within *migration systems* that connect countries and regions. We adopt the migration systems approach mainly as an analytical framework at macro level for the comparative research of Albanian migration in Austria and Greece, with the latter serving as a typological paradigm of the EU-Western Balkans migration system.

In this context, a migration system is conceptualized as two or more places (see nation states) connected to each other by flows and counter-flows of people, goods, services, and information (MABOGUNJE 1970; FAIST 1995; DE HAAS 2009). This, in turn, would lead to situations of quasi-organized migratory flows (MABOGUNJE 1970), which by linking people, families, and communities over space, often results in a “geographical structuring and clustering of migration flows” (DE HAAS 2009, p. 9). Of course, by focusing on individual processes within a migration system, mobility is viewed as a dynamic human trajectory of movement cutting across time and space strata (BOYD 1989, p. 641). Therefore, instead of perceiving migration as a linear, unidirectional, push and pull and cause-effect movement, it is rather understood as a synthesis of transnational, inter-connected, complex and self-modifying systems in which the “effect of changes in one part can be traced through the entire system” (FAIST 2010, p. 65).

Traditionally, the migration systems narrative has viewed migrants’ settlement as an end state based on the assumption that once migrants have settled at the country of destination, migration becomes self-perpetuating, since it tends to establish socio-economic structures (see e.g. networks), which are able to sustain the process phenomenologically (CASTLES and MILLER 2009; MASSEY 1990; BAKEWELL et al. 2011, p. 6). This approach, however, pays little attention to a range of determinant factors. These include: (a) The contextual dynamics that take place both in receiving countries and in countries of origin, changing the initial socio-economic conditions under which migration was unfolded (DE HAAS 2010) (e.g. the Greek economic crisis). (b) The formation of a wide range of networks (e.g. transnational, ethnic, social) (FAIST 1997). (c) The role of migrants’ agency in developing new strategies for responding to the new, changing situation (GEMI 2014, p. 13).

Therefore, by taking into consideration the above, we conceptualize migration systems as complex and multi-faceted processes distinguished by: (a) The heterogeneity and multiple dynamics of migration trajectories. (b) Changes and socio-economic transformations (e.g. economic crisis, stagnation) occurring in a migration system. (c) Strong networks. (d) The active role of migrants' agency (*vis-à-vis* structure). Our aim is to address the above issues by comparing two different national and local contexts within the same migration system. By focusing on the EU-Western Balkans migration system, the study seeks to bring a new understanding to one of the most representative cases, namely that of Albanian migration (Western Balkans). Two different migration and integration regimes, namely Greece and Austria (EU destination countries), are compared. Before diving deeper into the key features of the EU-Western Balkan migration system, it will be useful to reflect on the most important theoretical approaches on migration systems.

Migration systems theory: an overview

It is commonly acknowledged that economic and labour market opportunity factors have always played a substantial role in explaining the typology of international migration. That alone is not enough to interpret the mobility patterns and geographically structured morphology of migration (DE HAAS 2009, p. 4) that connect particular locations, places and regions in countries of both origin and destination. Linked to this, the core argument framing SKELDON's approach (1997) maintains that there is a solid interconnection among the level of economic development, state formation, and patterns of population mobility (in DE HAAS 2010, p. 7). It is further supported that an integrated migration system, which includes global and local migration flows, emerges if the above level of interconnection (or interdependency) is high and dense. Conversely, if it is low, the migration systems are not integrated and migration flows principally remain local (SKELDON 1997, p. 52). The question arises, however, whether this is enough to explain the emerging of migration systems. According to DE HAAS (2010, p. 8) what leads to the formation of migration systems is exactly the functional combination of economic and demographic elements along with high levels of connectivity (dependency) between 'core' and 'peripheral' countries (deriving from Wallerstein's world systems theory 1979), with the latter providing for a cheap and flexible labour force. In the same vein, the founding father of migration systems theory, the geographer AKIN MABOGUNJE (1970), focused in particular on the role of feedback mechanisms that tend to strengthen and pattern these initial structural interdependencies between the two ends (core versus periphery). It is exactly these feedback mechanisms that enable the mobility of people between particular cities, countries, and regions, together with the subsequent flow of goods, capital, ideas, and information (BAKEWELL 2012, p. 7). Ultimately, the result is a highly patterned typology of relatively stable mobility of people between particular countries and/or regions, which creates an identifiable geographic structure that persists

across space and time (MASSEY et al. 1998, p. 61). In an attempt to address the use of different aspects of the migration system, BAKEWELL (2012) distinguishes among different forms: *embedded functionalist*, *defined functionalist*, *skeletal*, *feedback*, and *abstract* systems. Interestingly, the *embedded functionalist* form seems to be quite close to our approach as it refers to the migration system as a self-regulating mechanism within a wider social system, which tend to be qualified by the nature of its very specific systemic features such as the labour migration system or the guest-worker system (BAKEWELL 2012, p. 5).

As mentioned above, migration systems are associated primarily with the idea that once a significant number of migrants have settled at the destination, migration becomes self-perpetuating as it enables the formation of socio-economic structures (i.e. networks) to sustain and generate the process (CASTLES and MILLER 2009; MASSEY 1990; BAKEWELL et al. 2011, p. 6). In the light of this, it is suggested that it is the *migration network theory* that provides a better analytical explanation for the emergence of migration systems (BAKEWELL et al. 2011, p. 10; FAIST 2000; MASSEY et al. 1993).

Specifically, migration network theory lays a strong emphasis on explaining how the past migration experience, the settled migrants, and established ethnic communities in particular countries of destination facilitate the arrival of new migrants (DELECHAT 2002; STARK and WANG 2002). In fact, it is commonly known that the social capital embedded within migrant networks in receiving countries lower the costs and risks of migration movements, hence increasing the likelihood of new migration flows (BASHI 2007).

In order to better understand how individual and family migration evolved into migration networks capable of shaping entire local and regional migration systems, it would be useful to consider GRANOVETTER'S (1973) theory about the relevance of weak and strong ties (KOHLEBACHER 2017, p. 168) and in particular the hypothesis of the 'strength of weak ties' (DE HAAS 2009, p. 27). Later known as 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital (PUTNAM 2000), the weak ties (bonding) refers to the high level of in-group homogeneity, while strong ties (bridging) is generally attributed to increasing inter-community and intergroup communication and cohesion within a given society.

Further elaborating on the issue, PORTES (1996) makes an additional point assuming that strong intra-group and intra-community ties (weak ties or bonding social capital) have the potential to produce negative social outcome by excluding outsiders (DE HAAS 2009, p. 28). The hypothesis of the 'downside of social capital' elaborated by PORTES (1996) maintains that 'strong bonding' and 'weak bridging' social capital tends to act as barriers to socio-economic integration and social mobility. The relevance for the theory of migration systems consists in the hypothesis that a certain degree of balance between bonding (weak ties) social capital and bridging (strong ties) would be a necessary prerequisite for the formation of migration systems from the point when migration movements gain their own momentum (DE HAAS 2009, p. 28). This approach, however, is considered not to pay enough attention to the structural or contextual implications

that migration flows have, both for the sending and receiving countries' context on the macro -level. Yet, it hardly takes into account the change of the initial conditions under which migration once took place (DE HAAS 2010) as for example an economic crisis (i.e. Greece), unemployment, decrease in remittances (i.e. Albania), and an unstable legal status (i.e. the case of Albanian migrants in Greece) (BAKEWELL et al. 2011).

The question, however, is how to explain the changes occurring in a migration system as well as the role of agency vis-à-vis structure in addressing such change (BAKEWELL et al. 2011). In this case, to be an agent implies to be able to exercise a certain degree of control over both structural factors and social relations. Of course, one may acknowledge that the action of agency at micro -level is framed and to a great degree determined by the legal status and opportunity structures established historically by the (national) context within which migrants exercise their own agency. However, the role of agency is indeed essential to the outcome of migration processes and concomitant socio-economic relations at macro and meso -level, as migrants have no choices but to develop new strategies and delve into alternative pathways in response to policies and structural restriction that condition their upward mobility.

Apparently, migration systems do not emerge solely due to a single migration movement *per se*. They rather establish themselves as the result of a *cumulative causation* effect linked to past migration corridors (MASSEY et al. 1993), with settled migrants generating chain migration flows. These evolve over the years into transnational communities that create further mainstreaming migration flows (DOOMERNIK and KYLE 2004, p. 266). It therefore seems reasonable to consider the migration network as a key variable for the cumulative causation hypothesis (BAKEWELL 2012, p. 8). According to MASSEY (1990), the concept of cumulative causation refers to the idea that migration brings about changes in socio-economic structures that "make additional migration likely" (p. 6). The cumulative causation argument, as elaborated by Massey, brings out an additional contextual feedback mechanism that goes beyond the receiving countries' reality. As far as sending countries are concerned, one may assume that emigration flows exert negative impacts on the economic structures of those countries (i.e. Albania) and of entire regions (i.e. Western Balkans). This happens mainly through the expatriation or loss of their human ('brain drain') and other capital resources, which particularly increases or perpetuates their dependency on the outside world (DE HAAS 2009, p. 10). This, in turn, could lead to the emergence of a 'culture of migration' (MASSEY et al. 1993, p. 453) which is usually strongly associated with individual socio-economic success, thereby turning migration into an increasing trend or even mainstreaming it as a prevailing social norm. As a consequence, it is possible to generate self-sustaining mobility by further cultivating aspirations which can be materialized through established migration pathways, facilitated by migrant networks that minimize the costs and risks of migrating (DE HAAS 2009, p. 11).

Returning to the subject at hand, the question is what advances have taken place in migration system theories that might enhance our understanding of the EU-Western

Balkans migration system. The first aspect that needs to be addressed is that of dealing with a system: the focus automatically shifts to its constituent parts, such as the analysis of countries of both origin and destination. The contextual dynamics that connects countries of origin and destination, and migration flows should also be considered. Furthermore, intervening factors such as migration institutions or/and policies are of interest, and it is important to find out how experience of migration in a given period may create the necessary conditions for chain migration and future movements to take place. The migration systems approach enables the researcher to consider various levels of analysis. The contribution of this approach lies in the fact that it dialectically ties together the action of migrant agency with the changes taking place within the wider social system (BAKEWELL 2012, p. 9). A synthesis of different migration systems profiles contains the following elements:

- (a) A set of interacting elements (e.g. flows of people, ideas and goods).
- (b) Social institutions embedded in the 'culture of migration'.
- (c) Strategies employed by particular actors (e.g. individuals, households, policy making and civil society organisations) at both ends (locations or countries).
- (d) A general socio-economic dynamics that shapes the ways in which the above elements change as a response to transformations taking place in both feedback mechanisms and the wider environment (BAKEWELL 2012, p. 4).

From a dialectical viewpoint, the decline of such systems should also be considered. According to DE HAAS (2010, p. 30), that may happen if:

- (a) migrant communities start to experience socio-economic upward mobility that usually is associated with increasing integration and/or assimilation, geographical dispersal, and the reduction of clustering,
- (b) additional legal migration restrictions are imposed, resulting in increased costs of migration and the creation of negative social capital for settled migrants, and
- (c) there is a substantial reduction of socio-economic opportunity gaps between origin and destination countries.

One may further assume that, when faced with the rupture of co-ethnic networks, migration flows may not necessarily decrease, but might be more likely to shift to new destinations (DE HAAS 2009, p. 30). The case of Albanians in Greece might again serve as an example here. On the other hand, the decline of (new) migration flows that occurs because of integration and assimilation processes, does not necessary mean the end of a migration system (ibid.). Integration and assimilation processes imply the decrease of bonding social capital and increase of bridging social capital. 'Strong' ethnic groups can sustain transnational relations and develop transnational identities, which have the potential to become trans-generational and 'diasporic' (COHEN 1997, p. x). In fact, several studies have indicated that integration (or assimilation) necessarily goes along with declining transnational ties, or vice versa (GUARNIZO et al. 2003, FOKKEMA et al.

2012; ITZIGSOHN and GIORGULI SAUCEDO 2002). In particular, migrant groups that combine successful economic integration with limited cultural assimilation and the maintenance of a strong group identity seem to represent a high potential for network migration (DE HAAS 2009, p. 30).

Summarizing, the migration systems approach allows for the conceptualization of migration moving beyond a linear, unidirectional, push-pull movement. Its advantages arguably lie in the description of the migration phenomenon as circular, multi-causal and interdependent, with the effects of change in one part of the system being traceable through the rest of the system (FAIST 1997, p. 193). Therefore, migration systems can be (a) self-feeding through chain migration, (b) self-regulating because of their ability to shape their dynamics according to the scale and magnitude of the systemic crisis, and (c) self-modifying through the shift of migration flows to a different destination when the initial destination has been exhausted (KING 2012).

Insights from the EU-Western Balkans migration system

The migration systems approach as elaborated above is assumed to create a common framework for understanding migration to Europe in terms of various interconnections between geographical areas (countries) and the concomitant causes and effects of migration. As we have seen so far, the fundamental assumption of migration systems theory is that migration brings substantial change to the social, cultural, economic, and institutional fabric at both the sending and receiving ends, setting up the conditions for the development of a cross-national space within which migration processes are unfolded (DE HAAS 2017, p. 5). In terms of EU migration systems and subsequent integration models, there is a high degree of heterogeneity between countries, which is reflected in a typological scheme that consists of four main groups (MEDAM 2017, p. 5):

- (a) Southern EU countries, which include relatively recent immigration countries, namely Greece, Portugal, Italy, and Spain.
- (b) North-western EU countries, which include long-standing EU immigration countries: Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom.
- (c) Scandinavian countries that are known for their generous welfare systems: Sweden, Finland, and Denmark.
- (d) New EU accession countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Romania, Poland and recently Croatia.

With respect to integration policies, the level of heterogeneity among the above countries seems to be even greater. The high level of variation in the terminology used to design policies that largely mirror the perception of the ‘other’ within national ideology, serves as an indication of this heterogeneity. This can be illustrated regarding largely instrumental concepts such as ‘guest worker’, ‘minority’, ‘race relations’, ‘assimilation’,

‘multiculturalism’, ‘integration’, and ‘citizenship’. It is exactly this heterogeneity of migration realities in Europe that gives shape to different migration sub-systems. The emergence and evolution of such sub-systems are a result of the high level of interconnectedness between the migration dynamics (deriving from the historical context and its present forms) and economic, political and cultural backgrounds (AUDEBERT and KAMEL DORAI 2010, p. 35). The geography of European migration sub-systems confirms the hypothesis of ‘privileged’ relations between receiving and sending countries that are largely linked by cultural and political affinities historically rooted in these countries (FASSMANN and MÜNZ 1992, p. 464). Consequently, the above-mentioned international links create the necessary background for the development of specific migration policies particularly on the part of receiving countries. These links include guest-worker recruitment systems or selective approaches to the granting of rights to certain nationalities. In fact, these double standard policies have played a crucial role in giving impetus to and definitely shaping initial migration patterns, which later tended to develop their own momentum through the self-perpetuating dynamics channelized by migrant networks (DE HAAS 2017, p. 35).

In the context of the sub-system of Western Balkan migration to the EU, there have been several attempts to explain the migration processes theoretically, using the specific conditions and the geography of the region as points of reference. In general, the dynamics that have shaped the geographical trajectories of migration corridors in the region have been attributed to the interconnection of four factors: (a) The history of the region. (b) The historical relationships and cultural linkages between both subsequent Western Balkan countries and (today) EU countries. (c) The pre-existence of migrant networks. (d) (Selective) migration policies particularly applied by receiving countries (KUPISZEWSKI et al. 2009, p. 9). Western Balkan migration patterns seem to have been shaped by a combination of certain general and specific factors such as:

- (a) The ethnic complexities and related historical controversies that often fuelled inter-ethnic conflicts. If we look deeper at the push and pull factors, it is clear that during the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and later in Kosovo in the 1990s, the factors that pushed people to flee their countries ravaged by the war were life-threatening conditions and ethnic cleansing (KUPISZEWSKI et al. 2009, p. 27).
- (b) The economic transformation that followed the systemic collapse of communist regimes. This collapse was followed by a model of planned economies in the region, or the so-called socialist self-management model applied in former Yugoslavia. The transition took place by the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s and it represented the transition to a modern competitive economic system.
- (c) Political actors who, by fuelling nationalistic sentiments and long-standing inter-ethnic rivalries, caused the destabilization of the entire region, as can be seen in the practices of ‘ethnic cleansing’ in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo during the 1990s.

Migration, however, was not a new phenomenon for the countries of the Western Balkans emerging in the 1990s. In fact, almost all countries of the region (with Albania being an exception) have traditionally been source countries of labour emigration to Europe. Through the guest-worker recruitment bilateral scheme (e.g. with Germany and Austria), emigration of the citizens of the former Yugoslavia continued even during the cold war era. In fact, in contrast to Albania where under the communist regime the freedom of (both internal and external) movement was strictly withheld, the former Yugoslav Federation had granted a relative freedom of movement to its citizens. The fall of the Iron Curtain however fundamentally changed the dynamics in the entire region by transforming its countries almost overnight in migrant sending countries whose citizens entered the EU in great numbers and under a number of preconditions, for instance on humanitarian grounds, as asylum seekers, or as labour migrants.

Despite the common ground, the region is quite diverse with neighbouring countries differing politically and economically, but also in terms of their historical and cultural developments. Furthermore, any degree of regional unity or commonalities of national migration experiences could hardly be assumed, especially in the light of geographical diversification among the receiving EU countries. This is illustrated by the fact that the guest-worker regime applied in the 1960s and 1970s contributed to the negative migration balance in the region with former Yugoslav citizens recruited as temporary, low-skilled workers in Germany and Austria (FASSMANN 2017, p. 126). At the beginning of the 1990s, rapid developments set in. They were marked firstly by a large-scale emigration from Bosnia-Herzegovina (as a consequence of the Balkan wars) to Austria and Germany. Along with that, the movement of Albanians to two neighbouring EU countries, Greece and Italy, assumed the proportions of a ‘biblical exodus’ in the aftermath of the collapse of the authoritarian regime. These developments definitely reshaped the dynamics of contemporary migration from the Western Balkans to the EU. In 2000, the effects of the Balkan wars were still noticeable, a fact which was witnessed to by the significant numbers of migrants from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in Germany and Austria (BALDWIN-EDWARDS 2004, p. 9; MEDAM 2017, p. 5).

Varying migration categories and motivations exist across the Western Balkan region, also making them difficult to generalise. Nonetheless, since the 1990s, four types of migration have been identified. These involve: (a) Forced migration associated with war and ethnic cleansing (BALDWIN-EDWARDS 2006, p. 3). (b) Ethnic migration that emerged as a combination of ‘voluntary repatriation’ to the ‘ancient motherland’ (e.g., the case of Albanians of Greek descent [*omogeneis*] fleeing to Greece at the beginning of the 1990s or *Aussiedler* in Germany) and special benefits derived from their privileged status (e.g., a special pensions scheme) compared to that of other migrants. (c) Human trafficking, which is presumably the greatest scourge on the contemporary history of the region. (d) Labour migration, which has taken on several regular or irregular forms (i.e. circular migration mainly involving semi-skilled and unskilled persons), including here the newly emerged category of (economic) asylum seekers. In 2015, over 130,000

migrants from Kosovo, Albania, and Serbia applied for refugee status in the EU, with Germany being at the top of the preferred destination countries (ZENELI 2017).

In demographic terms, since the fall of Iron Curtain, population figures in the region have significantly dropped, largely due to mass emigration. At the beginning of the 1990s, the war in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina created the largest single wave of emigration. Of the 2.2 million people who were forced to leave their home towns and villages, roughly 375,000 had emigrated to Central and Western Europe by mid-1992. Albania, on the other hand, has one of the world's highest emigration rates, in relation to its population, with a stock of emigrants nearly 39% of the total population (UNDESA 2015). Today, there are around 800,000 Albanian regular migrants living in Greece and Italy (353,826 in Greece as of April 2018, cf. GREEK MINISTRY OF MIGRATION POLICY 2018 and 442,838 in Italy in 2017, cf. ITALIAN MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICIES 2017). In Austria, the largest migration population is from the Western Balkans, with Serbia (181,700), Bosnia and Herzegovina (94,000), and the Former Yug. Rep. of Macedonia (21,700) ranking among the 15 top nationalities in the country (OECD 2017; STATISTICS AUSTRIA 2017).

It is clear that the political and socio-economic upheaval or transformation that the region of the Western Balkans have experienced since the 1990s would be impossible to understand without considering the crucial role of mass migration outflows towards the EU countries particularly since the 1990s. Of course, this large-scale migration has also profoundly shaped the socio-economic determinants in origin countries located at the EU South-East borders (DE HAAS 2017). In particular, migration seems to have been extremely beneficial for the economies of the Western Balkans with remittances playing the most significant role in their economies. It is estimated that remittances contribute more than 10% of the GDP of the Western Balkans (ZENELI 2017). In addition, they are supposed to boost small and medium enterprises, to support local consumption and contribute to the welfare system in absence of public social policies (ibid.). On the other hand, the phenomenon of brain drain of the young, the skilled, and the highly skilled has largely influenced the pace of development as well as the overall competitiveness of the region, which in turn seems to have slowed down the convergence of the economies of the Western Balkans with the rest of Europe.

Generally speaking, the region remains far behind the EU, with old rivalries and unsettled political issues remaining serious barriers. In terms of development, according to the World Development Indicators of the World Bank, the countries of the region remain very low in terms of GDP per capita compared with the EU average (as of 2014): Albania: 12.5%; FYROM at 15%; Montenegro at 20% and Kosovo (under UN Security Council Resolution 1244) at 11% (in nominal terms). Countries are still fragmented in terms of infrastructure connections, and the willingness to move faster towards a common economic area is lacking. During the last financial crisis in Southern EU countries such as Greece and Italy, a point at which most of the Albanian migrants were already settled, a considerable number of migrants returned home. According to official

statistics of the Albanian authorities (ALBANIAN MINISTRY OF INTERIOR 2015), 133,544 Albanian emigrants above 18 years of age have returned to Albania during the period 2009-2013.

Over the last decade, the EU-Western Balkans migration system seems to have entered into a transition period. The Western Balkan countries are undergoing two transitions: the first is the transition from a region of unstable migration patterns to a region with relatively stable migration at a much lower level, which is also much more predictable. The second is the transition from a region of emigration to one of mixed transit flows. Hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers and migrants arrived in the European Union via the Western Balkans in 2015-2016 alone, turning the region into a very important transit hotspot. At the supranational level, the boundaries between the EU and Western Balkan countries have become increasingly blurred, and the striking diversification and diffusion of migration itineraries point at the growing complexity of migration systems. Apart from being neighbouring countries, the Western Balkan countries of Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, Montenegro and Kosovo² are also EU candidate countries, their citizens hence falling into the category of so-called 'third-country nationals' (FASSMANN 2017, p. 122). Apart from the role of the subsequent national migration policies, the EU migration policy and the EU-Western Balkan cooperation on migration have also been of crucial importance in shaping the migration system. EU-Western Balkan cooperation is part of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) of EU relations with the Western Balkans (KUPISZEWSKI et al. 2009, p. 9). Indeed, the cooperation process on migration policy between the EU and the region has led to a considerable Europeanization of migration policies of Western Balkan countries, particularly focused on the control of irregular migration.

In conclusion, we adopt the migration systems approach mainly as an analytical framework for our study on Greece and Austria. In this context, a migration system is defined as a set of sending and receiving countries experiencing similar in- and out-flows and sharing some common socio-economic and political features. In this vein, migration from the Western Balkans to the EU is conceptualized as (a) an integral part of broader historical and socio-economic transformation processes that had taken place in the region, in particular since the 1990s. It (b) also has its internal, self-sustaining and self-undermining, endogenous dynamics, which (c) affects such processes of change in its own right.

² Croatia joined the EU in July 2013.

1.2 Conceptualizing the dynamic interaction of integration and transnationalism

Integration vis-à-vis transnationalism

It has been widely acknowledged that the theory of transnationalism has changed the understanding of migrants' cognitive geographies and their pathways of integration and patterns of mobility (VATHI 2015, p. 117). Some scholars support the idea that integration and transnational transfers can be complementary, in particular in the case of economic integration (FOKKEMA et al. 2012; GUARNIZO et al. 2003; ITZIGSOHN and GIORGULI SAUCEDO 2002), while others question the assumed positive relation between migrants' integration and transnationalism (FAIST 2000; PORTES 1997). In fact, various studies have shown that the process of integration in the host society is positively correlated (or negatively when assimilation prevails over integration) with engagement in transnational mobility. Therefore, the discussion on transnational mobility today is closely related to patterns and processes of integration in the host society (VATHI 2015, p. 179). The recent introduction of the concept of *integration as a three-way process* (GARCÉS-MASCAREÑAS and PENNINX 2016, p. 2) represents an effort to elaborate further on the role of the countries of origin as a third key actor in the process of migrants' integration. In the same line of thought, two relatively recent theoretical approaches have incorporated the perspective of migrants' countries of origin: *transnationalism* and the *migration-development nexus*.

At this point, the question is how the concept of integration is defined in the context of this study. Does it endorse the plurality of different socio-cultural realities as well as the dynamics of transnational links, or does it remain in a separate sphere of national ideologies? Furthermore, exploring integration in two different contexts (countries) would help to understand its impact (positive or negative) on transnational mobility and the sort of transfers that are pursued through it.

Integration

The concept of integration can be seen as the opposite of disintegration and/or segregation if observed from the perspective of urban space. In this classical sociological approach, integration refers to the shared beliefs and practices of social interaction in a given society. In a way, integration is conceived as a term derived from social and political theory, which has dominated contemporary political debate about the incorporation of migrants (WEIL and CROWLEY 1994, p. 110). In the context of political science, integration is seen with reference to the influence of prevailing institutions in receiving countries, which orient the beliefs and actions of elite and mass actors regarding immigration and integration (TRIADAFILOPOULOS 2013, p. 23).

Policy debates over integration, however, have taken place without any real agreement on what integration is. Some older approaches to the concept of integration are inclined to define it not only as a dynamic trajectory – a process towards a situation where socio-economic and political discrimination between demographically comparable immigrants and the native population is absent – but also as an objective. In that theoretical context, integration aims at ensuring the same living and working conditions as well as equal rights among native and migrant populations through the mutual adaptation of the two population groups during the integration process (HAMMAR 1985, p. 33). Thus, integration is perceived as a two-way process based on mutual rights and respective obligations for legally residing immigrants and the host country, a process that requires the full participation of migrants (C.E.C. 2003, pp. 18 f.). This means, first, that it primarily is the host country's responsibility to ensure that immigrants enjoy the same rights in a way that allows them to participate on equal terms in the economic, social, political, and cultural life of the receiving country. Secondly, it indicates that immigrants respect the host society's fundamental rules and values, and participate actively in the integration process, without relinquishing their ethnic identity. In practice, the use of the term integration refers to the acceptance and inclusion of the culturally different 'other' (i.e., migrant) within the dominant cultural system of the host country: this constitutes a fundamental mechanism for the reproduction of cultural codes and the integration of distinctive socio-cultural groups into a collective unit (VENTOURA 2011, p. 38). From a dialectical point of view, BAUBÖCK (2001) maintains that integration "should be understood as referring to the inclusion of newcomers as well as to the internal cohesion of societies and political communities that are transformed by immigration" (p. 2). Going a step further, recently, the introduction of the concept of *integration as a three-way process* elaborates on the role of countries of origin as a third key actor in the process of migrants' integration (GARCÉS-MASCAREÑAS and PENNINX 2016, p. 2).

As is clear, integration cannot be seen as a single or unilinear process. Quite the opposite, it is a multi-dimensional process and it takes on different forms in time. In fact, integration is a broader concept that refers to a dynamic, continuous and multi-dimensional process, the success of which requires a two-way adaptation from both immigrants and host society, while considering the role of the sending state in these domains. Such an approach however recognizes the asymmetry it implies (BAUBÖCK 2005, p. 18), since the institutional opportunity structures as well as the mechanisms of the state play the decisive role in the outcome of the process. Moreover, as immigration has become one of the more acute and controversial phenomena of (post-)modern times, its management at the national, regional and supranational levels remains a serious challenge. Either as immigrant receiving countries, countries of settlement, or as transit states, governments are increasingly seeking out new political tools to handle this extremely complex, controversial and multi-dimensional phenomenon effectively.

In fact, migration has extensively been discussed within the framework of the nation state. Having said that, integration policies are by virtue context-bound and entail

two components: the ideological and the institutional (PENNINX 2004, p. 21). With the state as a point of departure, the problem of ideological orientation is expressed in the definition of integration and the design of respective policies. In this vein, two policy models have been distinguished: the inclusionary and the exclusionary. The first refers to immigrants becoming citizens, with state policies recognizing immigrants as individual political actors (France), or to immigrants being recognized as citizens, but in this case ethnic minorities (as social groups) being conceptualized as relevant role players (Anglo-American multiculturalism). The second refers to guest-worker policies, according to which the country is not an immigrant country, immigrants are defined as outsiders and hence are considered to be temporary workers (German and Austrian model) (PENNINX 2004, p. 7). Therefore, the formation of social integration policies for immigrants appears to be linked directly to the tradition and history of each nation state, which developed in the course of the process of the establishment of the identity of the state. Thus, any form of integration is determined by the way that citizenship is perceived. Whether defined formally or in real terms, citizenship in liberal democratic societies means ensuring the individual's rights to participation in society. This refers both to the laws and to the institutions of a political system, which determine social interaction and the actors that take part in it. Meanwhile, it is clear that the common approaches that guide research on integration are concentrated in the dialectical interaction and in the interplay between top-down and bottom-up approaches. In claiming this, one at the same time acknowledges the key role of national opportunity to the positive or negative outcome of the social integration process. However, while acknowledging that national differences will not disappear, JOPPKE (2007) argues that they will persist in two ways, first "as sheer contingency and history, which will never be the same in any two places" and second, in nation state efforts "to obstruct, but more often to accommodate and mould the new in the image of the past" (JOPPKE 2007, p. 272). In other words, the suggestion is that one should distinguish between political and a-political integration. According to this, political integration adopts the perspective of the host country's national identity and historically derived conceptions of social membership. A-political integration, on the other hand, as is expressed by EU policy norms and directives, focuses on depoliticizing integration (in FANNING 2009, p. 44).

Transnationalism

In the last decade, the idea of transnationalism has been connected to further issues such as citizenship, integration and return migration. Transnationalism transcends the assimilationist assumptions of earlier migration research (DUNN 2005) to shed light on the ties and activities developed between individual, collective, and governmental actors located in two or more countries, mostly in immigrants' sending and destination countries. Theories on transnationalism transcend the earlier static assumptions in migration and integration research, aiming at shedding light on the bonds and practices developed between individual, collective, and governmental actors located in two or

more countries (mostly focused on sending and receiving countries). As such, transnationalism has looked at the role of sending states, which admittedly have increasingly sought to strengthen relations with migrant populations abroad, facilitating their return (and reintegration) or paving the ground for their economic and political engagement in the country of origin (ØSTERGAARD-NIELSEN 2016).

The question however is how the term ‘transnationalism’ is conceptualized and empirically operationalized. The term delineates social formations spanning national borders, such as transnationally active networks, groups and organizations (FAIST 2010, p. 9), which involve simultaneous overlapping affiliations of persons to geographically separate polities (BAUBÖCK 2002, p. 5). It also refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of nation states (VERTOVEC 1999, p. 447). Another feature central to the analysis of transnational social formations are structures or systems of relationships best described as networks (FAIST 2010). Dense and highly active networks spanning vast spaces are transforming many kinds of familial, social, cultural, economic and political relationships, with new technologies being at the heart of today’s transnational networks. In more practical terms, transnationality is defined by cross-border social and symbolic bonds and practices maintained by individuals and households (FAUSER et al. 2012, p. 4). In this context, transnationalism refers to migrants’ multi-stranded relationships, including the familial, economic, social, religious, and political, which span borders and link societies of origin and settlement (KING et al. 2013, p. 127).

Scholars have placed the transnational mobility of immigrants in the framework of the integration discourse, where national integration policies as well as citizenship regimes are considered as systemic opportunity structures that may encourage, discourage, or shape the degrees and types of immigrants’ economic, political and social-cultural involvement in transnational activities. However, over time, as the process of social integration deepens, transnationalism decreases, unless the presence of favourable conditions develops forms of advanced transnationalism (AMBROSINI 2014, p. 16). In contrast to this approach, other studies (CELA et al. 2013) showed a positive relationship between migrants’ economic integration and transnationalism, suggesting that economic resources facilitate the maintenance and development of cross-border ties (2013, p. 195). Taking a broader contextual perspective, GLICK SCHILLER et al. (1995, p. 50) support that being transnational is related to three basic factors: the history of immigration and modes of reception in the host country, migrants’ cultural resources, and the discrimination faced by an immigrant group. At the individual level, the forms and intensity of transnational engagement are assumed to be further conditioned by variables such as gender, social class, migration channel, legal status and economic means (VATHI 2015, p. 119), which are simultaneously related to community structure and political circumstances in the country of origin (VERTOVEC 2009).

At the same time, the phenomenon of discrimination and socio-economic exclusion of migrants in countries of settlement can also lead to the reproduction of

transnational mobility (FAIST 2010). As such, migrants may face different opportunity structures in their homeland and host country, and may move up or down the ladder in respect to one of the two, or experience downward or upward mobility in both of them (LEVITT and JAWORSKY 2007, p. 139). For instance, most well educated Albanian migrants experience de-skilling and devaluation of their human capital because they are only able to access low-status jobs in destination countries, notably Greece (VATHI 2015, p. 120). In this context, transnationality may play a role in producing and reproducing social inequalities that are understood in terms of inequality of opportunities in various forms of capital (economic, cultural and social), rather than in terms of outcome (FAIST 2011). From this perspective, migrants' economic, political and socio-cultural engagement in transnational activities are seen as an alternative strategy to cope with the risk of downward mobility (FAUSER et al. 2012, p. 10), as well as an attempt to create an environment that protects against the discrimination and marginalization commonly found in the host society (PORTES 1999, p. 471). This latter option, termed 'reactive transnationalism', implies that the greater the number of experiences of discrimination reported, the greater the participation in transnational activities (ITZIGSOHN and GIORGULI SAUCEDO 2005, p. 904).

Following the above line of reasoning, it is suggested that maintaining transnational mobility is sometimes considered to reflect a deeper level of (legal and economic) integration, or conversely to be a reaction to experiences of exclusion (negative integration) and discrimination. In the first case, previous studies (FAIST 2000; ITZIGSOHN and GIORGULI SAUCEDO 2002) have shown a clear positive relationship between transnationalism and economic integration, whereas in the latter case, the reactive transnational mobility is seen as a reaction to experiences of legal and social exclusion (de-regularisation and unemployment) and discrimination in a time of deep crisis. Therefore, a positive relationship between exclusion (negative integration) and transnationalism is also assumed. In particular, exclusion and disadvantage in time of deep crisis (e.g., Greece) are thought to be related to transnational orientation, although it is acknowledged that different migrant groups may adopt diametrically opposed strategies.

1.3 Methodological considerations

From a migration system perspective, the basic units of analysis would be a country-to-country comparison that can be strategically employed to explore both the contextual and the human agency factors, such as for instance the institutional architecture and policy orientation along with the specific characteristics of migrants' agency. Such an approach is usually structured on the basis of a typological combination of a constellation of countries (sending and receiving) that constitutes a specific migration sub-system. This typological combination usually compares sub-systems that include: (a) Receiving countries that have the same sending area as for example the case of Albanians-to-Greece and Albanians-to-Austria. (b) Country-to-country sub-systems that

have the same destination country, such as the case of Albanians-to-Italy or Romanians-to-Italy. (c) Destination areas that belong to the category of EU and non-EU countries as in the case of Germany and Switzerland (AUDEBERT and KAMEL DORAI 2010, p. 35).

Against this background, the analytical approach of this study is based on the argument that the complex processes of integration and transnationalism take place within the EU-Western Balkans migration that fall under the typological paradigm of EU receiving countries – Austria and Greece, sharing migrants from the same sending area, namely Albania.

In order to explore the diptych of integration vis-à-vis transnationalism, it was necessary to adopt a multi-level perspective, which elaborates on three levels: micro, meso, and macro. The micro-level perspective views migrants as independent actors, as agents within a constellation of increased cross-border flows of persons (FAIST 2010). The meso-level probes into the relational structures and networks (mainly that of family) that individual migrants develop through their transnational patterns, whereas the macro level analyses the broader national frameworks within which the dynamics of integration and transnational mobility develops. In an attempt to bridge these levels in a functional way, our approach builds on the hypothesis that macro-level migration processes are driven by a set of economic and non-economic factors, while on a micro level, the acts of migrants' agency are motivated by a constellation of interconnected but yet distinct socio-economic, cultural and political factors (DE HAAS 2012, p. 14).

The margin within which individuals can exercise their own agency however is largely dependent on the context and related structural factors that define the space within which individuals can make independent and rational choices. The question arising here is how these diametrically opposing levels of explanation, notably structure/context (macro level) and agency (micro level), can be linked together? Whereas the latter focuses on micro factors that shape migration behaviour (i.e. perception, preferences, individual characteristics), the first perceives migrants as rather passive actors whose actions are conditioned by opportunity structures (DE HAAS 2012, p. 22). It is the meso-level that indicated the existence of an in-between space linking the macro and micro levels through the formation of migrant networks (FAIST 1997). As has already been discussed in section 1.1, a number of feedback mechanisms exists that can explain why migration processes tend to become self-perpetuating, leading to the formation of migrant networks and migration systems (CASTLES and MILLER 2009; DE HAAS 2010). At this point, the challenge that the tri-dimensionality or multi-level analytical approach poses is the question of designing a representative comparative research framework. At first sight, the most practical level to enter upon is that of the statistical administrative data that is often used by researchers. It is commonly accepted that the cross-national comparison of such data is profoundly problematic (PENNINX 2010, p. 28), since no unified data collection and processing methodology exists. The national ideology on the general perception and formal construction of migrant or minority categories is even more important, however. A very characteristic example is the approach applied by the

Municipality of Vienna according to which the variable of nationality or ethnicity should not be included in integration monitoring data, so as to avoid the social stigmatization of certain migrant groups just because they happen to appear statistically less integrated than others (Interview no. 6, Vienna). On the basis of the above and in line with the present case study, the theoretical part of the study draws on the two key concepts of integration and transnationalism. The typology employed to explore and test them empirically is as follows: Integration is conceptualized as a three-way process, which includes the country of destination, the country of origin, and migrants themselves. It is explored on the basis of three dimensions: (a) the legal-political, (b) the socio-economic, and (c) the cultural-religious.

Transnationalism is defined as a social-economic and political network spanning the national borders (of Austria and Greece), which involves simultaneous and overlapping affiliations of persons to geographically separate polities, and which links people and institutions across the borders of nation states. The typology applied identifies three forms of transnationalism: (a) linear, (b) resource dependent, and (c) reactive transnationalism (ITZIGSOHN and GIORGULI SAUCEDO 2002).

In terms of empirical research, the main concern was determining the research design and sampling techniques that would ultimately support our main goal, which is to compare the same ethnic group within different national and local contexts, but at the same time to shed light on factors that explain differences. With these points of reference, the starting point of this study is the analysis of processes of integration and transnationalism as well as related policies on two different levels, the local and the national, based on an empirical, comparative, and comprehensive approach that takes into account different relevant dimensions. Furthermore, qualitative methods aid the understanding of intentions and social meanings, even though it cannot measure the frequency of individuals' attitudes and behaviours accurately. Case studies and relevant research tools present real people and their narratives, while offering the context through their constructions of social relevance (VARGAS-SILVA 2012, p. 15).

As a broader set of methods based on the qualitative approach, ethnography is particularly effective in exploring socio-economic integration processes with special regard to everyday life experience and its social relevance as well as the meaning underlying the 'construction' of realities. Similarly, ethnography is equally appropriate to explore not only transnational connections, but also the social dynamics through which they are established, evolved and transformed. In addition, it is highly relevant since it can shed light on the relationships that exist between 'structure, agency and geographic context' (HERBERT 2000, p. 550) by revealing the 'processes and meanings' that underpin social life across space. The multi-sited perspective is an ethnographic perspective akin to integration and transnational studies (VARGAS-SILVA 2012, p. 305). Following people, connections, associations, and relationships across space is the focus of multi-sited research (*ibid.*, p. 298).

With these in mind, the methodology of the empirical part relies on multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork, comprising of 30 semi-structured interviews conducted in two phases with stakeholders and key informants in Athens (2016) and Vienna (2018). The ethnographic multi-sited approach was highly relevant for this study, since its revealing of the ‘processes and meanings’ that underpin social life across space and time can shed light on the relationships that exist between ‘structure, agency and geographic context’ (HERBERT 2000, p. 550). This approach entails doing serial ethnographies on the same topic over time, and/or working simultaneously upon a communal concern in a multi-sited way (ibid., p. 312). In this context, this study adopted a comparative perspective involving three countries: Austria and Greece as destination countries and Albania as a country of origin. The only method, that was applied was that of snowball sampling, ensuring that a random sample has been selected.

The first set of 15 interviews was conducted in Athens in 2016 (see Annex 2). The sample included Albanian migrants of the first generation and representatives of the Albanian community in Greece. These categories allow us to explore in depth the multi-level schemes that shape the integration dynamics and mobility patterns of Albanians in Greece, precipitated by the impact of economic crisis on their livelihood. The sample includes representatives from the Municipality of Athens, civil society stakeholders, individual migrants, migrant community representatives, as well as UNHCR and other experts. The second set of 15 interviews took place in Vienna in 2018 (see Annex 1). The sample includes representatives of the Municipality of Vienna, civil society stakeholders, migrant community representatives, individual migrants, and experts from the ISR, IOM, FRA, and ICMPD.

The interview guide contained questions about integration as experienced from different social and professional positions (i.e. in the role of the migrant from a community and/or receiving country perspective) and in different contexts. Further questions dealt with the impact of a given context on the integration trajectory, the mode of integration, the motivations for becoming transnationally mobile, the factors that facilitated or impeded transnational mobility either in Albania or in destination countries, and the type of transfers carried out.

2 Cross-national vis-à-vis cross-local approach

In order to improve insights into the role of states and policies in migration processes, it is necessary to embed the systematic analysis of policy effects into a comprehensive analytical framework of the sending- and receiving-country factors driving international migration. Although there is consensus that macro-contextual economic and political factors and meso-level factors such as networks all play a certain role, there is no agreement on their relative weight and mutual interaction. Precisely how do migration policies affect migration if we control for the many other factors that drive international migration? The study distinguishes between different migration and integration policy regimes in EE, namely those of Austria and Greece. Austria is part of the North-Western European regime, which evolved from guest-worker policies³ (1960s to 1980s) to national integration policies that recognize migrants as permanent citizens (1990s to 2010s) and, more recently, to policies that promote migrants' cultural assimilation (GARCÉS-MASCAREÑAS and PENNINX 2016, p. 7). In this regard, Vienna is characterized as a promoter in terms of designing and implementing pro-active integration policies at both national and local level, taking advantage of its dual role as the capital of the country and as a single province under the federal system of government in Austria. Vienna is the only metropolis in Austria, having had a population of 1.840 million in 2015, 634,933 (36.5%) of whom were born abroad (STADTWIEN 2017).

Greece, on the other hand, is considered as part of the Southern European migration and integration regime, characterized mainly by labour participation with a lesser degree of welfare provisions and a limited number of bottom-up integration initiatives (GARCÉS-MASCAREÑAS and PENNINX 2016, p. 7). With reference to the integration of Albanians in Greece (and Italy), MAI and SCHWANDNER-SIEVERS (2003) characterized their socio-economic condition through the term *differential inclusion*, implying that migrants are integrated in some sections of society, mainly in the labour market, but denied access to others, such as citizenship and political participation. In fact, in Greece, most Albanians continue to live in a status of partial integration (GEMI 2017, p. 257), as a result of the model of *differential exclusion* and the non-interventionist integration policies implemented so far. The stance of the Greek state (centralized system of government) over the past twenty years may be broadly summarized as one where the state officially rejected migration through restrictions and closed-border policies, while officially acknowledging the market demand for low-paid labour (GEMI 2017, p. 258). The particular features of the Greek case are associated with the position of Athens within the wider national space. As a Southern European metropolis, the urban complex of Athens dominates in the system of Greek cities, both in demographic terms and in terms of socio-economic activities (LAVRENTIADOU 2006, p. 56). These features in combination with the lack of a social welfare system – according to the classical model of the welfare state of Northern Europe – leave greater space for the role of family and

³ These policies considered migrants only as temporary workers.

informal networks within which the migrant population is accommodated. Despite the presence of a large number of migrants (compared to other urban areas), there are no tailor-made local policies focusing on integration at the local level, which is mostly attributed to the centralized system of government. According to the statistical data of the GREEK MINISTRY OF MIGRATION POLICY (2018), 41% (210,693 people) of the overall migrant population (third-country nationals) in Greece (517,591) is spatially concentrated in the wider region of Athens.

Given the differences between Greece and Austria (Athens and Vienna) in the levels of governance in the national and local domains, looking at integration processes might shed more light on how particular migrant culture and migratory history on the one hand, and general public institutions and migration policies on the other, shape integration outcomes. Indeed, comparing between different countries might enable us to understand not only local and regional policy responses, but also the relationship between the national, regional, and local levels within the same migration system. Most importantly, adopting cross-national and cross-local comparisons that examine the same migrant group in different national and local contexts has been proved to enable scholars to assess the role of contextual factors (e.g., citizenship regimes and integration policies), adding further explanatory tools for conceptualizing differences in migrants' integration outcomes.

2.1 Contextualizing the multi-level governance of migration and integration: Austria compared to Greece

2.1.1 Austria

The genuine trajectory from migration to integration

Today, Austria is a genuine migration country. Corroborating this, the stock of foreign nationals residing in Austria amounts to 1.3 million, or 15.3% of the estimated total population of 8.75 million. Germans are the largest group (181,600) followed by Serbian (118,500), Turkish (116,800), and nationals of Bosnia-Herzegovina (94,600) (BIFFL 2017, p. 6).

The definition of terms and the articulation of legal categories are essential for the portrayal of the national narrative and the way that the categorical 'us' and the 'other' have been constructed over time. It reflects the ideological orientation, which in turn exerts great influence on political decision-making on the matter. In Austrian legislation, the term 'alien' (*Fremder*) include all individuals/foreigners that hold another nationality than Austrian (*Inländer*). In the same line, the term 'third-country national' is used for foreigners (*Ausländer*) who are not nationals of a member state either of

the European Economic Area (EEA) or of Switzerland, whilst the citizens of the EEA countries fall under the category of 'Union citizen'. Yet, the term 'person entitled to be granted asylum' (*Asylberechtigter*) is used for individuals to whom the refugee status has been granted, while the terms 'person entitled to subsidiary protection' and 'asylum seekers' (*Asylwerber*) are both used for people entitled to subsidiary protection and for those applying for asylum⁴. The terms 'ethnic group' (*Volksgruppe*) is exclusively applied to the groups of Austrian citizens that are historically located in particular parts of the country's territory, whose native language is other than German and have distinct ethnic characteristics (PERCHINIG 2013, p. 193). What makes the difference, however, is the 'political correctness' approach pertaining to the use of terms: 'lawful' and 'unlawful' entry and residence of aliens, rather than 'legal' or 'illegal' migrants, as typically happens in certain countries (i.e. in Greece)⁵.

Currently, the migrant population in Austria is divided into two categories according to legal status and corresponding rights. The first category comprises citizens of EU member states, divided in two sub-categories: those that joined the EU prior to 2004 (i.e. Germany, Italy, Greece) and those states that became members of the EU from 2004 to date (i.e. Hungary, Slovakia [2004] and Bulgaria, Romania [2007]). Included in the second category are the third-country nationals with the citizens of Western Balkan countries (i.e. Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM, Albania), and Turkey being by far the predominant group followed by the Russian Federation and Asian countries (PERCHINIG 2013, p. 200). Focusing on the category of 'third-country nationals' would be important for distinguishing among the seven sub-categories differentiated according to legal status: Foreign workers: seasonal and annual workers, dependent employers (salary earners), self-employed workers, highly skilled workers, family reunification, students, and asylum seekers (BIFFL 2017, p. 16).

The Typology of International Migration Patterns in Austria

Austria has a long tradition of migration movements. Throughout its history, Austria has found itself on the crossroad of international migration either as receiving or as sending country. Being in the centre of a multi-ethnic empire, Austria had received large influxes of populations from Eastern Europe and the Balkans (MOURÃO-PERMOSER and ROSENBERGER 2012, p. 41).

In order to get a better insight into the Austrian position on the international migration map, it would be useful to draw on a tailor-made typology aiming at synthesizing the key features of Austrian migration experience over time. Having as reference point the contributions of BAUBÖCK (1994, pp. 155-157), as well as FASSMANN and REEGER (2008, pp. 20 f), this typological approach builds on six distinctive historical stages extending over more than 50 years, from 1950 to the present day.

⁴ In addition, statistical data has increasingly been presented according to place of birth (birth in Austria and outside of Austria), which is used as a proxy for migration (PERCHINIG 2013, p. 193).

⁵ 'Unlawful' here means not authorized by law, whereas 'illegal' means forbidden by law.

(1) **Cold War Era:** three influxes of refugees from countries of the former Soviet Bloc (1956-1981). Given a range of pulling factors such as its geographic location on the borderline between the two 'camps', its neutral status and its Western democratic system, Austria attracted a large number of asylum seekers from countries under Soviet rule. During this period, Austria emerged as a receiving country of about 500,000 refugees in the course of the uprisings in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Poland (1981) (BAUBÖCK 1994, p. 156). It should be highlighted, however, that Austria was not seen as a country of permanent settlement, but rather as a transit hub that could lead to other Western destinations.

(2) **Guest-worker (*Gastarbeiter*)** system of the recruitment of foreign workers (1961-1973). Following the German model, Austria embarked on the 'guest-worker' system (CASTLES AND MILLER 2009, p. 97) during the 1960s and early 1970s, whereby the Austrian government actively recruited temporary labour migrants (mostly from Turkey and former Yugoslavia) for low-skilled jobs in the fast-growing economy of the country (FASSMANN and REEGER 2008, p. 10; KRZYŻANOWSKI and WODAK 2009; BAUBÖCK 1994). In the late 1960s, the guest workers represented about 10% of the total active labour force on the Austrian labour market, with (former) Yugoslav workers accounting for 78.5% of foreign workers and Turkish workers making up around 12% of the total foreign work force in Austria (OECD 2014, p. 63). The predominance of (former) Yugoslav citizens in Austria is considered a possible result of the geographical proximity, on the one hand, and the historical and cultural legacy dating back to the Habsburg Empire on the other.

Founded upon the rotation principle (Interview no.10, Vienna), integration was not perceived as an important matter, since the intention was that migrant workers would leave the country as soon as their labour was no longer needed (MERHAUT and STERN 2018, p. 30). Despite the growing magnitude of the phenomenon, their presence remained legally and politically invisible. This can be attributed mainly to the persistence of the political elite in viewing the phenomenon within the realm of 'exceptionality', rather than treating it as regular migration inflow (FASSMANN and REEGER 2008, p. 21).

A migration commission that was established by social partners such as the chamber of commerce and the trade unions managed Austria's guest-worker programme. Taking into consideration the interests of social partners at the regional level, the commission coordinated the guest-worker programme via the public recruitment agencies under the provisions of the corresponding bilateral treaties (BIFFL 2014, p. 48). Meanwhile, the crisis and the economic stagnation that followed the first oil price shock in 1973 altered the economic parameters that in turn led to a rise in inflation, increased public debt and rapidly growing unemployment. In such circumstances, the Austrian government took drastic measures aiming at the reduction of guest-worker quotas and the 'exportation of unemployment' (FASSMANN and REEGER 2008, p. 10) which, indeed, brought the recruitment programme to an end.

(3) Family Reunification and Labour Migration (1973-1989)

On account of the measures taken by the Austrian government to end the guest-worker regime and their persistent efforts to provide incentives for guest workers to leave the country, some did depart, but others remained. Family members subsequently joined those who remained. Therefore, the migration phenomenon was still a rising issue but this time under a different regime, that of family reunification (MOURÃO-PERMOSER and ROSENBERGER 2012, p. 41). The change in human geography and the mode of migration particularly marked a turning point in the Austrian migration model from single male migration to family migration, the relocation from the city's outskirts to the inner urban spaces, and the predominance of the Turkish migrant population followed by citizens of (former) Yugoslavia (mainly Serbs) (FASSMANN and REEGER 2008, p. 21).

In the 1980s, the foreign population numbered about 285,000 and was therefore stabilizing at the level of 4% of the total population of the country. A survey carried out in 1983 showed that more than 50% of the families of (former) guest workers had already been reunited in Austria (BAUBÖCK 1994, p. 157). On the other hand, the persistence of Austrian employers to continue hiring former guest workers by renewing their contracts and thus prolonging their stay on the Austrian labour market, is worth mentioning. This tendency was seen as beneficial for both employers and workers as far as the latter were trained and specialized in offering specific services (Interview no. 10, Vienna). Even more interesting is the fact that trade unions and employment offices were in favour of and supported the extension of work permits (OECD 2014, p. 64). Again, regardless of the increased visibility of migrants on the labour market and in the urban areas, with permanent features attached to their socio-economic presence, no integration policies were foreseen at the time (Interview no. 10, Vienna).

At the institutional level, the introduction of the Foreign Workers' Act (AuslBG) in 1975 and its later amendment in 1988 (Amendment to the Foreign Employment Law) formalised the terms and conditions of foreign employment, which dated back to the 1930s (BIFFL 2017). It brought forward a multilevel scheme of different work permits aiming at regulating the access of foreign workers to the Austrian labour market. The most relevant provisions of the law included those concerning the employer-bound work permission, obliging migrants to leave the country if their work relations with a specific employer were no longer upright. It also demanded eight years of consecutive employment in order to gain the right (certificate of exemption) of unrestricted access to the Austrian labour market, although it was subjected to numerical restrictions extended to certain economic branches (OECD 2014, p. 65).

(4) East-West migration: economic migration and the humanitarian crisis in the aftermath of the fall of the Iron Curtain and break-up of Yugoslavia, including the subsequent application of the quota system (1989-2011). The year 1989 marked a historical turning point, at which Austria became a de facto destination country. The fall of the Iron Curtain brought about freedom of movement for the people of the former Soviet

Bloc, causing the reinstalment of old paths of East-West-migration (FASSMANN and REEGER 2008, p. 11).

Polish citizens were the first large group to begin arriving in Austria, whereas migrants from Romania comprised the second largest group. Despite the large magnitude of inflows from the former communist countries of Eastern Europe, they represented only a small share of total foreign employment in Austria (BAUBÖCK 1994, p. 159). Moreover, at the beginning of the 1990s, following the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the successive wars in Croatia (1991–1995) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992–1995), millions of refugees fled their countries to find refuge in Austria. According to the census data, the size of the foreign resident population reached the record level of 518,000 in 1991 (compared to 291,000 in 1981), with citizens of Yugoslavia and Turkey accounting for 60% of the total foreign population in the country (FASSMANN and REEGER 2008, p. 11).

A notable structural shift, away from a migration pattern entirely concerned with labour migration to the prevailing inflow of economic and humanitarian migrants from Eastern Europe and the Balkans, occurred at this point. Instead of ignoring the fact of being transformed into a major host country of mixed migration flows, Austria now for the first time realized the inefficiency of its existing migration managing system. Furthermore, in contrast to previous years, the country found itself faced with the dilemma of integration.

As a response to increased migratory inflows, the Ministry of the Interior⁶ took over the responsibility for the overall migration policy. In addition, a number of legal and political reforms were launched, aiming at revising and expanding the previous asylum and labour migration legislation⁷ (BAUBÖCK 1994, p. 155). Among the most important interventions was the replacement of the numerical limits (per economic branch) by a general quota on employment of foreign workers at 10% of total employment in 1990. The quota system was further restricted to 9% in 1993 and again to 8% in 1995, with the latter aiming at counter-balancing the potential free-mobility inflows of EU citizens to the Austrian labour market, following the accession of Austria to the EU in 1995 (OECD 2014, p. 65).

In terms of political climate, the management of migration and subsequent policies became a point of contention in public and political discourse. The far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), taking advantage of anti-immigrant sentiments, advocated against both the recognition of refugee status for asylum seekers and the social integration of migrants (BAUBÖCK 1994, p. 155). In response to demands fuelled by the highly politicized public rhetoric, the government passed a residence law (Settlement and Residence Law of

⁶ Until then, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs had regulated the labour migration policy in collaboration with the social partners.

⁷ The legal developments: The introduction of the Alien Law and an amendment to the Foreign Employment Law in 1990. The promulgation of the Alien and Residence Laws and an amendment to the Foreign Employment Law in 1993. The EEA-Agreement in 1994. Amendment to the Residence Law in 1995. Amendment to the Foreign Employment Law in 1996, and to the Alien Law in 1998.

1993), which reflected the political commitment to impose further restrictions on labour migration from third countries. The law, among other things, introduced a numerical threshold for residence permits issued at the level of federal states, rendering, thereby, the entrance to and stay in Austrian territory and the access to the labour market subject to different admission systems⁸ (BIEFL 2017, p. 48). In addition, the use of the concept of ‘key workers’ marked a turn from low and semi-skilled labour migration to that of skilled and highly skilled workers (FASSMANN and KOHLBACHER 2008, p. 6). Furthermore, the introduction of a new system of yearly residence quotas limited the role of the tripartite setting (provinces, public employment services and the social partners) to an advisory level (BIEFL 2017). Under the slogan ‘integration before new immigration’, the Aliens Act of 1997 kept the restriction over labour migration in force via the residence quota, even though it introduced measures to consolidate the legal status of third-country nationals settled in Austria. Later on, in 2002, the amendments to the Foreign Workers Law limited the access of third-country nationals to the legal categories of key workers and family members (OECD 2014, p. 69). Along the lines of EC directives on the status of long-term third-country nationals, a title of permanent residence (residence certificate) issued after five years of continuous stay was introduced, aiming at the harmonization of residence rights with employment rights (KRALER 2011, p. 35; MERHAUT and STERN 2018, p. 35). In addition, the ‘integration agreement’ stipulated the compulsory attendance of language courses as a prerequisite for obtaining the long-term resident permit.

(5) Intra-EU labour migration mobility

As was already discussed above, Austria experienced migration as free-mobility inflows, first after its accession to the EU in 1995 and later due to the eastern extension of the EU (MOURÃO-PERMOSER and ROSENBERGER 2012). Regarding the latter, Austria, together with Germany, Belgium, and Denmark, made use of the full duration of seven years before granting full freedom of movement to new EU citizens from Central and Eastern Europe. The right of free mobility for citizens of the new EU member states of 2004 thus came into force on the 1st of May 2011, and on the 1st of January 2014 for those new EU countries whose accession took place in 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania) (FASSMANN et al. 2014, p. 5). However, the restriction imposed had little impact in practice. During the period between 2007 and 2016, Austria received 730,582 migrants from other EU member-states. Among them, two countries, namely Romania (172,949) and Hungary (101,331) had the lion’s share (37.5%)⁹ in the country’s labour market (STATISTICS AUSTRIA 2017, p. 3). At the same time, increasing rates of inflows from the ‘old’ EU neighbouring countries (see Germany) and the newly acceded countries (in 2004 and 2007) showed a growing percentage of female workers, which seems to be

⁸ The quota for residence permits was administered by the Ministry of the Interior and the employment quota by the social partners and the (former) Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

⁹ Data taken from the forthcoming technical report ‘Territorial and Urban Potentials Connected to Migration and Refugee Flows’, ESPON 2020, where the author is part of the research team.

connected to a specific demand for female workers in old-age care, health care, tourism or domestic services (FASSMANN and REEGER 2008, p. 13).

Lastly, it is worth noting that the free-mobility inflows of EU nationals are generally perceived as a win-win solution for the Austrian socio-economic reality. This is because the mobility of the intra-EU labour force is deemed necessary to (partly) meet the needs of the Austrian labour market for semi-high-skilled workers, without this workforce being subject to integration programmes and their related costs. Secondly, it is used as countervailing tool to curtail the access of third-country nationals to the Austrian labour market (STATISTICS AUSTRIA 2017, p. 13).

(6) Score-based Migration Scheme and Refugee Crisis (2011-2017)

Since 2010, the immediate need for skilled migrants to perform qualified jobs on the Austrian labour market has become clear. It has also become apparent that the quota system was insufficient in terms of attracting medium-level and highly skilled workers. After a long process of negotiations with social partners and efforts to reconcile the different approaches¹⁰, the government replaced the quota system with a new score-based migration scheme called the ‘Red-White-Red’ Card¹¹ in July 2011.

The R-W-R Card is employer-bound and is issued for a period of 24 months¹². After its expiry, the labour migrant may apply for a R-W-R-Plus Card in order to gain unlimited access to the Austrian labour market (OECD 2014, p. 70). This scheme initially distinguished among three levels: (a) Very highly qualified workers. (b) Medium-skilled workers in occupations displaying shortages in the workforce. (c) A labour market-specific tier in the medium to highly skilled category based on a salary threshold¹³ (ibid.). In addition, points or credits are collected according to age, qualifications, language and work experience. In other words, following a similar model applied in other countries (i.e. Canada or Australia), highly skilled migrants are identified on the basis of a credit system (PERCHINIG 2013, p. 205). Meanwhile, the same law integrated the Council Directive 2009/50/EC on the EU Blue Card for highly qualified workers from third countries. Interestingly enough, the Blue Card was introduced as an additional work permit category, rather than being integrated into the new point-based migration scheme. Nevertheless, EU Blue Card holders are allowed to switch to the more favourable R-W-R-Plus Card after 21 months of employment in a 24-month period (OECD and EU 2016, p. 192).

In 2015, like other European countries, Austria found itself faced with unprecedented inflows of refugees from the Middle East. Austria ranked fourth in terms of

¹⁰ While the trade unions and Chamber of Labour proposed increased investment in training and qualification of the existing labour force, the Economic Chamber pushed for further introducing highly qualified labourers through migration.

¹¹ The RWR Card combined the work and residence permit in a single document.

¹² For more information see: ><https://www.migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration/>>

¹³ For more information see: <<https://www.migration.gv.at/en/types-of-immigration/permanent-immigration/>>

absolute numbers of asylum seekers in Europe, after Germany (476,500), Hungary (177,100) and Sweden (162,500) (BIEFL 2017, p. 41). Presumably due to the more restrictive policies and the subsequent international events that led to the closure of the Balkan corridor and the signing of EU-Turkey deal, the inflow of asylum seekers declined during 2016 (OECD 2017, p. 170; SCHOLTEN et al. 2017, p. 14). According to OECD (2017), 42,100 asylum applications had been filed by the end of 2016, marking a drop of 52% in comparison to the previous year.

In general terms, about 214,400 people immigrated to Austria in 2015. It should be emphasized, however, that 42.7% of the total migrant population are citizens of EU and EEA countries. Third-country nationals (107,000) accounted for 50% of the total arrivals, with the citizens from former Yugoslavia being numerically the most significant group (STATISTICS AUSTRIA 2017).

The Governance of Migration and Integration

For obvious reasons, it is not possible to get a clear understanding of migration and integration governance if we do not first outline a ‘map’ of the management structure and the regulatory institutions assigned with designing and implementing the relevant policies. The federal governance model of Austria, which is composed of nine federal provinces, has an immediate impact on the application of integration policies at the federal and provincial levels. In this respect, one can make two distinctions: a horizontal one cutting across all separate ministries, and the vertical hierarchy covering the provincial authorities (HEROLD 2017). Regarding migration and (to a lesser extent) integration, the relevant policies are regulated at the federal level. To this end, the management scheme of migration and integration is assigned to three regulatory institutions: the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, and the Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (since 2013). The Federal Ministry of the Interior is responsible for issues regulating the inflows and residence status of third-country nationals entering the country. The Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour manages access to the labour market, while the Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs is in charge of the visa regime as well as migration development policies in cooperation with third-countries of origin. Thus, the co-ordination of the management of migration and the subsequent policies fall under the jurisdiction of Federal Government and are regulated by the corresponding federal laws, whilst the Federal Chancellor’s role is one of mediation as need arises (BIEFL 2017, p. 16).

In terms of integration management, the State Secretariat for Integration (responsible for coordination of integration policies) was established under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior in 2010. This development clearly demonstrated that, contrary to the pro-active integration initiatives at local/provincial level (see the case of Vienna), integration only became a priority for the federal government in 2010. Before that, there was no legal basis for integration measures at federal level (Interview no. 6, Vienna). In

2014, in an attempt to reorganize the ministerial competences, the State Secretariat for Integration was disestablished and integration management became the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was then renamed Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (BIEFL 2017, p. 16). The federal provinces now mostly focus on the implementation of a wide range of social integration policies. Their main goal is to ensure social cohesion and the functionality of the redistributive policies based on the welfare principles of the Austrian state. It should be highlighted, however, that the federal provinces maintain a high degree of independence, as long as these policies are not coordinated by a related federal institution responsible for integration (MOURÃO-PERMOSER and ROSENBERGER 2012, p. 53).

Integration: the point of contention in Austrian politics

In Austria, the term ‘integration’ was already used in the 1950s in relation to labour market integration and the naturalization of ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*), repatriated from then Czechoslovakia (PERCHINIG 2009, p. 229). Since the 1960s, the term was mainly used in connection with the integration of special social groups, such as persons with disabilities and special needs. It was only in the 1990s that the term re-entered the scene of migration management, reflecting as such the urgent need for designing specific integration policies regarding ‘foreigners’ (PERCHINIG 2012, p. 34). The end of the 1980s marked a historical turning point in Austria with regard to migration and the integration of foreigners. This development might be attributed to a range of factors. **First**, the historical events that took place in countries of Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the dissolution of the former Yugoslav Federation led to a rapid increase of the mixed inflow (economic and humanitarian) of migrant populations into Austria. Given the prevalent perception that Austria was neither an immigration nor a destination country, citizens were taken by surprise. At the beginning of the 1990s, the far-right Freedom Party (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*/FPÖ) took advantage of increasing public concerns on the ‘uncontrolled’ inflows of newcomers, and did not neglect the opportunity to promote its political agenda, unleashing anti-immigrant campaigns. Stigmatizing slogans such as ‘lazy immigrant’ and ‘bogus refugee’ became common epithets widely used in public debate (RHEINDORF and WODAK 2018, p. 17). The extreme polarization and the divisive character of public discourse led to the rise of right-wing political forces (FPÖ) and consequently to the ‘legitimization’ of policy measures (on behalf of the SPÖ-ÖVP coalition) aiming at imposing stricter migration control, closing borders, deportations and refoulement at the border (FASSMANN and REEGER 2008, p. 28). The problem of migration however did not suddenly emerge from nowhere. This leads to the second factor, namely the failure of the guest-work regime (FASSMANN and REEGER 2008). As we have already seen, a significant number of former guest workers not only did not leave Austria to return to their countries of origin, but were also joined by members of their families. In the absence of any integration policy, the phenomenon of structural exclusion and marginalization gradually became evident.

In addition, specific ethnic, cultural and religious features coupled with socio-economic disadvantage in comparison to the native population contributed to the forging of the perception that there is an ‘integration problem’ (MOURÃO-PERMOSER and ROSENBERGER 2012, p. 45). Under these circumstances, the emphasis was placed on restricting migration by shifting the focus to integration at the beginning of the 1990s (PERCHINIG 2013, p. 202).

Indeed, in the early nineties, the political debate took a new direction oriented towards regulating migration to compensate for demographic ageing (PERCHINIG 2012, p. 34). To this end, it was deemed necessary to embark on a new migration scheme, the priorities of which should be, first, the introduction of an annual quota system for the newcomers and second, the improvement of the legal status of settled migrants. In terms of integration, the same Residence Act introduced the minimum income threshold and the housing criteria as preconditions for having a stable residence permit, which in turn were applied to both categories, namely the newly arriving migrants as well as settled immigrants renewing their permits. Equally important, however, is the reference, for the very first time, to the term ‘integration support’ that was to be provided to migrants working in Austria, their family members, and to recognized refugees in order to facilitate their integration into Austrian economic, cultural and societal life.

Given the increased political pressure from the far right, the coalition government of the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs/SPÖ*) and the Austrian People’s Party (*Österreichische Volkspartei/ÖVP*) later embarked on a new reform. Under the heading ‘integration package’, the then Minister of the Interior (SPÖ) announced a complete revision of the existing Aliens Law and the Residence Act. This came as a response to the prevailing approach according to which migration should be reduced and instead, more emphasis should be placed on improving integration. At the same time, ‘integration before new immigration’ (*Integration vor Neuzuwanderung*) became the key phrase of the reform (KÖNIG et al. 2015). In terms of policy-making, the introduction of an ‘integration package’ has been viewed “as a first step towards a more pro-active integration policy” (PERCHINIG 2012, p. 35). In the new Aliens Act, the Foreigners’ Employment Act and the Asylum Act (June 1997), integration was addressed as a two-tiered process. On the one hand, the term ‘integration support’ was defined as a set of measures for recognized refugees, while on the other, the phrase ‘advanced integration’ addressed long-term residents along with the associated rights and obligations assigned to third-country long-term migrants (PERCHINIG 2013, p. 202).

By the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium, the European political scene experienced the rise of the far-right forces. In Austria, meanwhile, the far-right Austrian Freedom Party/FPÖ appeared to be highly successful in mobilizing xenophobic sentiments by adopting a strongly anti-immigrant agenda. The parliamentary elections that took place in October 1999 were particularly crucial in shaping the dynamics of the political development in the field of migration and integration. The new right-wing coalition government formed by the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) and

the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) announced the introduction of compulsory German language courses under the rubric of 'comprehensive integration' (KÖNIG et al. 2015). The entire approach derived from the alleged 'unwillingness' of immigrants to integrate, which, according to the Freedom Party (FPÖ), was attributable to the specific cultural features of certain migrant groups. Many believe that the term above was invented and used as an argument to justify the transfer of the responsibility for integration from the Austrian state to migrants themselves (KRALER et al. 2013, p. 41). Whatever the case might be, in line with this approach, migrants were to sign an 'integration agreement', which obliged them to attend compulsory language and integration courses as basic requirements for obtaining a permanent residence permit and gaining access to related rights (MOURÃO-PERMOSER and ROSENBERGER 2012, p. 46). Furthermore, in the case of non-compliance, the immigrants would be subject to increasing sanctions, ranging from financial penalties to expulsion from Austrian territory (MOURÃO-PERMOSER 2012, p. 183; KRALER et al. 2013, p. 40). The argument put forward by the then head of the parliamentary group of the FPÖ, namely that the tests aimed at selecting those who were 'ready to integrate', were met with harsh criticism mainly from civil society and the academic community (PERCHING 2012, p. 231). The approach that viewed language acquisition as an obligatory precondition for migrants to gain access to legal status also stood at the centre of criticism. The SPÖ, who governed the City of Vienna, strongly opposed the proposal of installing compulsory measures, since they had previously taken a leading role in introducing voluntary integration programmes for migrants and refugees. The draft was ultimately adopted in 2002 (HOLLOMEY et al. 2011, p. 12). A striking inconsistency however existed between political discourse and the legal definition of 'integration agreement'. On the one hand, the definition of the integration agreement creates the impression of having the promotion of migrants' autonomy and increasing their capacity to participate in society as primary goals. On the other hand, in public and political discourse the term integration was gradually loaded with negative connotations and used to justify the introduction of more restrictive legal and policy frameworks. Yet it is believed that, viewed from a broader political perspective, the employment of the term 'integration agreement' indeed reflected an underlying exclusionary approach (MOURÃO-PERMOSER 2012, p. 183).

The integration agreement was again revised in 2005, when the Austrian government embarked on a new reform of Austria's migration law, in the particular context of adopting the EU *acquis* on long-term resident permits and family reunification. In 2006, the integration agreement was amended by raising the level of language competence necessary for a permanent residence permit for all migrants except 'key personnel' to the level A2. At institutional level, the Austrian Fund for Integration¹⁴ was responsible for organising the language courses (PERCHING 2013, p. 204). The practical implications of failing to comply with the integration agreement within five years mostly was the imposing of administrative fines (ibid.). The fulfilment of the

¹⁴ It had been established in the 1960s by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and the UNHCR with the task of supporting the integration of refugees.

integration agreement was the only way to get full access to long-term resident status for third-country nationals and to the rights attached to it. At communication level, the discursive legitimization of these measures took place in the name of the security and the protection of natives against the ‘abuse’ of Austrian institutions by migrants (RHEINDORF and WODAK 2018, p.17).

In 2008, the government proposed a National Action Plan on Integration (NAPI) in order to enhance the cooperation among all parties involved for successful integration measures in Austria (PERCHINIG 2013, p. 204). The National Action Plan on Integration (NAPI), which was finally adopted in 2010, aimed at promoting a more coherent and multi-levelled integration approach¹⁵. It provided an overarching framework, the main aim of which was to mainstream the integration strategy of the Austrian government in seven fields of action (NAPI 2018): language and education, work and employment, rule of law and values, health and social issues, intercultural dialogue, sports and recreation, as well as living and the regional dimension of integration. To this end, it was deemed necessary to establish three bodies: an expert council, a statistical yearbook and an advisory committee on integration (INTEGRATION REPORT 2016).

In April 2011, the Austrian Aliens Law and the Aliens Employment Law introduced a reduction of the minimum time required to prove language knowledge at the level A2 to two years. At the same time, the B1 level of language proficiency, although not compulsory, is recommended to promote the chances of access to both the long-term resident permit (based on the EU directive) and citizenship (KRALER et al. 2013, p. 42). Furthermore, the subsequent amendment introduced pre-entry language tests for immigrants from third countries (‘German before immigration’) at the A1 level. Even though it was not explicitly articulated, the pre-entry testing was de facto restricted to migrants’ family members, as other categories such as the highly skilled migrants (including their family members) had been exempted (ibid.).

The responsibility to ‘integrate’ was thus not only a question concerning individual migrants, either settled or temporary, but was extended to potential migrants prior to their migration (HOLLOMEY et al. 2011, p. 22). After admission, third-country nationals were subject to the integration agreement, which requires the level A2 of German language within two years after arrival, which in turn would allow for the renewal of residence permits (MOURÃO-PERMOSER 2012, p. 188).

On the other hand, the need for a high-skill labour force brought into place a new points-based system, the so-called Red-White-Red Card, which aimed at attracting qualified immigrants (PERCHINIG 2013, p. 205). At the same time, even more emphasis was placed on the efficient processing of asylum applications, fighting irregular migration, and creating an effective system deterring ‘bogus’ asylum seekers (RHEINDORF and WODAK

¹⁵ The NAPI consists of three parts: (a) The integration report, which monitors integration in seven domains. (b) The integration indicators, which measure the level of integration based on several indicators (i.e. school completion, employment, proficiency in German). (c) Integration measures, which serve to operationalize the overall proposals in the seven domains (WODAK and BOUKALA 2015, p. 264).

2018, p. 17). At this point, it would be worth stressing that, despite the controversial rhetoric on values and cultural integration, the basic requirement was simply that of proven language competence, while exceptions included second-generation offspring of migrants and vulnerable individuals. The government facilitated the process of language acquisition through subsidizing and/or organizing language courses. The orientation courses on norms and values give a hint at Austria's integration approach, according to which "The nationwide values and orientation courses ... are an essential basis for a successful integration process" (INTEGRATION REPORT 2016, p. 5). However, it should be added that the required language level and income threshold have been progressively increased, and the criteria of selection introduced since 2011, which found their materialization in the pre-entry tests, definitely affected third-country migrants coming from certain countries (MOURÃO-PERMOSER 2012, p. 190).

The establishment of the State Secretariat for Integration in April 2011 has been one of the most significant institutional developments in terms of integration. In symbolical terms, its establishment can be viewed as an official acknowledgement that Austria is indeed a country of immigration, a fact persistently denied in official discourse until recently. Under the rubric 'integration based on merit', the State Secretary's approach supports the idea that migrants should not be judged on the grounds of their origin, but according to their effort and achievements (PERCHINIG 2013, p. 205). It is highly significant that the foreword of the Integration Report (2016), signed by the then Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, defines integration as "a two-way process, whereby the adaptive capacity of the people who are allowed to stay in Austria must be greater than the capacity of the majority society. The fundamental values of Austrian society are not negotiable and are therefore to be complied with" (INTEGRATION REPORT 2016, p. 5).

As a policy response to the cascade of events caused by the refugee crisis in 2015, the Austrian Council of Ministers adopted the 50 Action Points Plan for the integration of refugees in January 2016. This has since been applied as a guiding principle for a common integration policy (INTEGRATION REPORT 2016, p. 8). It included measures to be taken in the fields of language and education, work and employment, the rule of law, and values. Early in 2015, the public discourse on integration converged with two other discourses, that on educational reform and that on terrorism. In the light of these developments, the Austrian parliament voted in favour of a reform to tighten its asylum legislation in June 2016. One month later, in July 2016, the introduction of the Recognition Act established a right to and the simplification of the assessment procedure for foreign qualifications, including those of humanitarian migrants without documentation of their qualifications (OECD 2017).

In early 2017, the government introduced a new legislative framework that came into force in September 2017. It foresaw the introduction of an obligatory 'integration year' for humanitarian migrants and asylum seekers. The integration measures include, among other things, skills assessment, support for recognition of foreign qualifica-

tions, language training, as well as civic education and professional orientation. The fulfilment of measures is documented in a so-called 'integration pass'. It also provides support to employers who hire beneficiaries and allows asylum seekers to be paid in service cheques for household and childcare tasks (OECD 2017, p. 80). One month later, the elections to the Austrian National Council in October 2017 resulted in a shift to the Right. Issues of immigration and integration dominated the election campaign. It carried the promise of an awakening and a new political style (FALTER and STERN 2018, p. 9). The winner of the election, the ÖVP (and the new Chancellor Sebastian Kurz), capitalizing on the tense political atmosphere, turned the issues of migration and asylum into the centre of its campaign. One major point of its campaign was its leading role in the process of closing the so-called 'West-Balkan Route' (2015-2016) in order to halt the stream of people fleeing the war in Syria and coming to Austria and Germany. At the same time, the emphasis lay on associating migration with other controversial phenomena such as crime, Islamic extremism, difficulties encountered in education, and the excessive cost of the welfare state, which could be addressed by closing borders and introducing stricter policies on migration. The ÖVP leader, Sebastian Kurz, was in favour of applying the Australian immigration model, which in the case of Europe would mean setting up reception facilities and camps located outside European borders, where asylum seekers should wait for a ruling on their asylum status (FALTER and STERN 2018, p. 11). On a more radical stand, the far-right FPÖ, in its campaign programme, was openly positioned against any form of immigration and argued for more protection of the 'homeland' and its 'autochthonous population'. It went a step further in rejecting the principle of multiculturalism, focusing primarily on Muslim immigration. Likewise, being highly critical of the European Union, the FPÖ called for more efforts to secure the external frontiers while wanting to formulate national migration policy. In an atmosphere of a controversial political race, the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) featured similar positions as the ÖVP. It advocated reducing the number of refugees in Austria, the enforcement of deportations, and a fundamental reform of the European asylum system. Like the ÖVP, the Social Democrats opted for the establishment of asylum centres in North Africa, and suggested that the European Union should run them. In the end of 2017, the coalition agreement between the ÖVP and the FPÖ announced restrictions concerning the application for citizenship, massive cuts in financial support for refugees, the closing of the external borders of the European Union, and the enforcement of deportations (FALTER and STERN 2018, p. 11).

In conclusion: there are two levels of policy-making in Austria: national (federal) and provincial. At national level, the federal government is responsible for the overall migration policy, notably the determination of those who are allowed to enter the country, and of the conditions under which his/her status is regulated. The provincial/local level is mostly responsible for implementing integration policies in order to ensure social cohesion, with the City of Vienna historically being in the forefront of pro-active integration policies. The integration topic was only adopted at national level in 2010 for the first time. In retrospect, migration patterns to Austria have changed dramatically in

the second decade of the new millennium. Whereas the successor states of the former Yugoslavia and Turkey were the main areas of origin until the late 1990s, migration from old and new member states of the European Union prevailed in the 2000s, with Germans being the largest group of ‘foreigners’. Despite the increase of humanitarian migration recorded in 2015-2016, the general trend towards a decline of migration from third countries is often attributed to immigration restrictions imposed on both humanitarian and economic migration in the early and mid-2010s (PERCHINIG 2013, p. 198). Similarly, the general trend in both migration and asylum policy is increasingly restrictive, prohibitive, and often subordinates humanitarian concerns to national interests, whereas the successive amendments are viewed as reflecting the increasing trend towards control, national security, and combating the alleged abuse of the asylum system (MERHAUT and STERN 2018, p. 44).

In Austria, integration was largely ignored for a long time as a field of political action (MOURÃO-PERMOSER and ROSENBERGER 2012, p. 53). When it did enter the political agenda, that was largely due to a negative politicization of the topic by anti-immigrant actors. Integration was used within a larger discursive strategy that sought to justify restrictive immigration policies by framing resident immigrant communities as a problem. In that context, the allegation of ‘lack of integration’ was often brought up in connection with the religion, values, and attitudes of immigrant communities (MOURÃO-PERMOSER and ROSENBERGER 2012, p. 53). The politics of integration were primarily discursively constructed as pertaining to the cultural dimension. Whenever the topic is discussed and policies are enacted under the label of ‘integration,’ they tend to cover civic integration and focus on language acquisition and civic education, thus emphasizing the sharing of values and norms as well as the cultural aspect of the need to use a common language. Moreover, the discourse refers exclusively to the integration of third-country nationals, that is, of immigrants from outside the EU, even though 40% of all foreign population living in Austria come from other EU countries (KRALER 2011). At the same time, the structural integration of foreign-born population and their offspring (second and third generation) suffers from severe deficits, particularly with respect to educational attainment. Nevertheless, to a certain extent the lack of policies addressing structural integration is mitigated by a strong welfare state (WOLKENSTEIN 2013, p. 181; MOURÃO-PERMOSER and ROSENBERGER 2012, p. 40). At the institutional level, the parliamentarisation of migration policy in the mid-1980s combined with the reconfiguration of migration policy-making in the late 1980s and early 1990s caused the disappearance of the informal, non-public decision-making mechanisms so characteristic of social partnership in post-war Austria. Henceforth, it was increasingly the political system – and its bureaucracy – that dominated the policy-making process and determined the contents of migration policies. Nevertheless, there is a somewhat paradoxical situation featuring the political scene in Austria. On the one hand, immigration and integration are central issues in almost all parliamentary election campaigns. Yet on the other hand, success (or failure) of political parties in election campaigns seem to have very limited influence on the migration policy eventually adopted by the very same parties once in

government. By all standards, policy-making in the field of immigration and asylum is characterized by continuity (KRALER 2011). To some degree, this might be a reflection of the dominant role the bureaucracy plays in framing and making migration policy as well as of a wider consensus on key principles among political parties.

2.1.2 Greece

Greece is a country on the southeast border of the European Union (EU), and for the greater part of the twentieth century, it was predominantly an emigration country. Emigration flows from Greece started decreasing in the mid-1970s, while the inflows in the 70s and 80s consisted of returning Greek guest workers, members of the Greek diaspora, as well as political exiles from the time of the Civil War of the 1940s (MAROUKIS and GEMI 2010). In the beginning of the 1990s, the size of the migratory inflows grew rapidly due to the events of 1989 in the former socialist countries of the Balkans and Eastern Europe. The country's economic growth, its integration in the EU, and its geographical proximity to the countries of the former Eastern Bloc, contributed to its transformation into an immigration country. In the 1990s, Greece was transformed overnight from what was a largely homogeneous country in terms of language, as well as national and cultural heritage, into a host country of mass irregular migration flows from former socialist countries in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. In terms of numbers, migrants from neighbouring Albania formed the largest population of third-country nationals, representing about 65% of the total migrant population according to census data from 2001 and 2011.

In a population of 10.75 million, 525,519 were TCNs¹⁶ legally residing in Greece in December 2017, according to the Ministry of the Interior database on valid residence permits (GREEK MINISTRY OF MIGRATION POLICY 2018). Again, 68% of the legally residing migrant population in Greece are Albanian citizens (356,848), making them by far the largest migrant group, followed by individuals coming from the countries of the former Soviet Union, that is Georgia (18,561) and the Ukraine (18,473), but also Southeast Asia, more specifically Pakistan (16,380) and India (13,675). There is a gender balance trend with men constituting slightly over half (276,726) of the total migrant population, while 46% of the population (243,515) is relatively young, notably between 30 and 49 years of age.

A closer look at the valid residence permits for TCNs as provided by the GREEK MINISTRY OF MIGRATION POLICY (2018), shows that the highest concentration of migration population is found in the category 'other', notably 267,215 TCNs, with those residing in Greece in the context of 'family reunification' following with 207,241. In fact, the residence permits for 'other' reasons includes long-term residence permits of 10-year or indefinite duration as well as permits for humanitarian or exceptional reasons. In contrast to previous years, the ratio of long-term permits to total residence permits has

¹⁶ TCNs = Third-country nationals.

exponentially increased with long-term permits accounting for 37% of all valid permits in 2016 and 2017, compared to 23% in 2012, 26% in 2013, 33% in 2014 and 36% in 2015. Considering the evolution of residence permit data, it could be assumed that the migrant population in Greece is undergoing a period of stabilisation and long-term integration, with overall numbers of long-term residence permits showing a considerable increase, along with the naturalisation of the second generation (TRIANDAFYLIDOU and MAROUFOU 2017). In sharp contrast to the past and as a result of the reformed Greek citizenship law (L. 4332/19.07.2015), a significant increase in the number of citizenship acquisitions of second generation migrants (through birth or study) as well as an increase in acquisitions of citizenship by TCNs can be observed for 2016 alone. With regard to their previous nationality, the vast majority of naturalized TCNs were Albanians, numbering 28,251 persons in 2016 and 11,615 in 2015 (GREEK MINISTRY OF MIGRATION POLICY 2017).

At the beginning of the 2010s, the human geography of the migrant population residing in Greece started to change. The Greek financial crisis and the austerity measures dramatically altered the country's economic and social conditions, also affecting the lives of immigrants. The impact of the economic crisis on immigrant workers as the most vulnerable social group was manifold and largely interwoven with the systemic characteristics of the Greek labour market. The crisis hit the sectors of the Greek economy employing most of the migrant work force harder, notably the construction sector, which has seen significant unemployment since 2008 (GEMI 2013). Surveys (i.e. MAROUKIS and GEMI 2013) point to the fact that regular immigrants were losing their legal status due to high unemployment, which was estimated to be 36% during the third quarter of 2012. Data from the GREEK MINISTRY OF MIGRATION POLICY (2018) showed that the largest number of legal immigrants residing in Greece was recorded in 2010, when 601,675 residence permits were in force, while in December 2014 this number was smaller, standing at 524,242. It is estimated that this reduction in the number of residence permits was due to the effects of the economic crisis, the insecure employment status and the dramatic rise in unemployment. As a result, a significant number of immigrants lost their legal residence status due to their inability to secure the appropriate documents (e.g., sufficient annual income, employment contract, insurance) necessary for the renewal of residence permits. According to MIPEX's results (2015A), employment rates in Greece were the lowest in the EU in 2014 (around 50%), with the economic recession and austerity measures exacerbating the structural problems of Greek social and integration policies. As few immigrants had secured permanent residence and equal rights under Greece's rigid and restrictive residence policies, many of them who had lost their jobs also lost their legal status and therefore their basic social entitlements. As a consequence, Greece ranked 27th out of the 38 MIPEX countries by the end of 2014, the most problematic policy areas being residence status, citizenship, and anti-discrimination policies for the long-settled immigrant population.

In addition, Greece was transformed into a transit country for a large number of asylum seekers from Syria and other war-torn countries of the Middle East and Africa in

the mid-2010s. As a result, Greece experienced an unprecedented influx in 2015, when over 857,000 asylum seekers transited through the country to other countries of the EU, while it has received an additional 200,000 people since January 2016, the majority again coming from Syria (SKLEPARIS 2017). This massive influx showed a dramatic decrease after the implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement in March 2016. Nevertheless, arrivals from Turkey to the Aegean islands continued through mid-late 2016, 2017, and even in the first months of 2018. Compared to the 1990s, however, the difference consists in the fact that whereas migrants from the former period perceived Greece as destination country, those from the latter tend to view it as a stopover along their migration route to Western Europe (CRAWLEY and SKLEPARIS 2017). This is corroborated by the fact that although Greece accounted for the majority of arrivals in 2015, only 1.5% of those transiting claimed asylum in the country, according to asylum service data, since other EU countries (i.e. Germany) were seen as their final destinations. However, following the closure of the Balkan route, there has been a sharp increase in asylum applications lodged in Greece in 2016 and 2017 (TRIANDAFYLLOU and MAROUFOF 2017, p. 21). Under these circumstances, one of the most challenging issues for Greece has been the location and integration of those eligible for refugee status on mainland Greece, while processing those sheltered in camps on the Aegean islands.

With regard to the applicants' nationalities, Albanians take in the fifth position on the applicants' list (4.2%), following Syrians (36.2%), Pakistanis (12.4%), Afghans (11.7%) and Iraqis (8.6%), (GREEK ASYLUM SERVICE 2017). Albania, however, is the country of origin displaying the lowest recognition rate (0.2%). Again, in 2017, Albanians were the largest national group in terms of apprehensions at land borders, while Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans remained the national groups most frequently crossing the sea borders.

Migration and integration regime

As has already been pointed out, the migration experience of Greece as a country of destination gained momentum at the beginning of 1990. In order to get a clear picture of the migration and integration regime in Greece, it would be useful to draw on a typology that is structured around three distinctive stages covering more than 27 years, from 1990 to present days (1990s, 2000s, and 2010s).

From emigration to immigration country: the 1990s

The uncontrolled massive influx of Albanians and other migrants from countries of the former Soviet Union in the 1990s found the Greek state unprepared. Its reaction had been characterized as inconsistent and as focused only on the short term (TRIANDAFYLLOU et al. 2013). At the same time, the public discourse of political elites emphasized the need to fortify the borders and protect national identity, while viewing migrants as an imminent threat to social cohesion and ethnic homogeneity as embodied in the foundation triptych of ethnos: fatherland, family and religion.

Indeed, the mass influx of migrants, mainly from the Balkan countries, was accompanied by the development of very hostile attitudes, which led to the general rejection of this new 'other'. The only easy path to acceptance was through identification with dominant values and socio-cultural references (for instance changing names). This also implied that immigrants were supposed to discard specific ethnic group features, which were perceived to be antagonistic to the core values of Greek culture (GEMI 2015). This trend is reflected in the persistence of the Greek legislator in attributing a temporary nature to the phenomenon of immigration, starting from the notion that the purity of the Greek race and ethnicity must be preserved (BALDWIN-EDWARDS and APOSTOLATOU 2009). The presence of 'old' ethnic groups (e.g., Albanians and Bulgarians) was considered a threat to the myth of ethnic homogeneity, a fundamental principle of the formation of the modern Greek nation state and ethnic identity.

In the absence of prior relevant policy, the legal framework introduced in 1991 (Law 1975/1991) to deal with what was referred to as 'aliens', was exclusively concerned with security considerations, preventing illegal entrance and facilitating the deportation of undocumented migrants. This made it almost impossible for newcomers to secure a legal status upon arrival or after they had entered the country (TRIANDAFYLIDOU 2009). Given the circumstances and the wider dynamics of socio-political developments in the region, the contradictory result of such non-functioning and poorly implemented legislation was more undocumented migration influx, continuing unabated throughout the 1990s. A few years later, confronted with the uncontrolled situation of the increasing presence of undocumented migrants and irregular entries, the Greek government opted for a series of regularisation programmes, granting amnesty to undocumented migrants. Two presidential decrees introduced in 1997 (P.D. 358-359/1997) signalled the beginning of regularisation procedures or the so-called amnesty programmes. They gave migrants the opportunity to apply for a temporary residence permit or 'white card', which, in turn, allowed them to collect the complementary documents necessary to apply for a 'green card'. A total of 150 days of social insurance contributions were required for the acquisition of the green card. By the end of the 1990s, 371,641 immigrants had been registered for the white card, but only 212,860 had received a green card (FAKIOLAS 2003). In this phase, the integration issue was neither included in the political agenda, nor in any legal text, because Greece persistently refused to admit its irreversible transformation into a country of immigration. As long as the public opinion remained obsessed with and stuck both in the idea of defending national interests and in the phobic dilemma of security, migration was viewed as 'an unwanted burden for the country' (TRIANDAFYLIDOU et al. 2009).

In terms of employment, it has been observed that during the economic growth period of the 1990s, a number of factors played an important role in the attraction of migratory flows, mainly from neighbouring countries. These include the improvement of living standards, the openness and seasonality of certain sectors of the Greek economy, and the relatively easy geographical access in conjunction with the so-called 'developed model' of the informal economy. These economic developments created the urgent need

for a new workforce. The high educational level of the native population in association with economic prosperity led to the departure of Greek citizens from the occasional, seasonal, low-paid, and low socially identified job sector (KASIMIS and PAPADOPOULOS 2012). The massive entry of women into the labour market created a vacuum in the traditionally organized Greek household, which apparently was filled by the services provided by migrant domestic workers (MAROUKIS 2010, p. 248; PAPATAXIARCHIS et al. 2008). At the same time, considering the cumulative causation of migration movements as a self-sustaining process, informal ethnic networks played an important role in attracting new immigrants, mainly due to their mediation in finding housing and employment. This is confirmed by various studies (TONCHEV 2007; MAROUKIS 2010; BELLAS 2012) in terms of access to the Greek labour market. In reality, the dynamics of these developments consolidated a new type of labour division, where immigrants and native population are employed in 'parallel labour markets'. Immigrants mostly occupy unskilled (and seasonal) jobs, often below their educational qualifications in sectors characterized by the production of intensive labour, such as the agricultural and construction sectors, and/or informal activities such as domestic services (IOSIFIDES et al. 2007). The phenomenon of labour division is attributed both to the large size of the underground Greek economy, which displays a seemingly unlimited demand for low-paid unskilled work, and to the inflexible Greek labour and immigration policy in general.

From irregular migration to integration: 2000s

In response to increasing concerns on managing irregular migration, a new law (L. 2910/2001) came into force in 2001, which gave migrants a second opportunity to legalize their status through the 'Green Card II' regularisation programme. To qualify, migrants had to present proof of residence for at least a year before the implementation of the law. By the end of August 2001, 351,110 migrants had applied for the acquisition of a work permit, which was a precondition for the provision of a residence permit. The amendments to the above law, introduced in 2002, also allowed migrants legally residing for 2 years to renew their residence permit for another 2 years and change employers. More importantly, it provided the opportunity to apply for a permanent residence permit, which was extended to legal migrants who had been permanently residing and working in Greece for more than 10 years. Nevertheless, the lack of the necessary infrastructure and persisting bureaucratic constraints created enormous problems and delays in the processing of the applications. This forced the government to extend deadlines and provide migrants with temporary residence permits, which were subjected to successive extensions.

By the mid-2000s, it had progressively become clear that immigration was no mere temporary phenomenon, but rather a permanent one with over 800,000 migrants (both regular and irregular) who 'were here to stay'. In this respect, a new law (3386/2005) on the 'Entry, Residence and Social Integration of Third-Country Nationals on Greek Territory' was introduced and came into effect in 2006. For the very first time, the issue of socio-economic integration was explicitly addressed. In its 'Complete Action Plan for

the Social Integration of Immigrants' (articles 65–66), social integration was defined as “granting rights to third-country nationals, which ensure both their equal participation in economic, social and cultural life of the country, but also, the respect of fundamental norms and values of Greek society [...] with the simultaneous preservation of their national identity”. In order to achieve these aims, the law signalled the development of an integrated action plan focused on three pillars: (a) Knowledge of the Greek language, history, and civilization. (b) Integration in the labour market. (c) Active social participation. Arguably, the main priority was to bring Greece closer to EU legislation, particularly in relation to reunification conditions, and residence and work permit procedures. This was done in compliance with the EU directives for race equality (*Directive 2000/43/EC*), family unification (*Directive 2003/86/EC*), and long-term residents (*Directive 2003/109/EC*).

During the same period, Law 3284/2004 ‘On the Ratification of the Greek Nationality Code’ reinforced the *ius sanguinis* approach, and excluded any residence-based access to citizenship, except for stateless persons who were born in Greece. In sharp contrast to ethnic Greeks, the law enforced a stringent set of conditions for non-ethnic Greeks (*allogeneis*), who were required to have been staying legally in Greece for at least 10 years in the last 12 years, to have a clean criminal record, and to prove knowledge of the Greek language, history, and civilization. The children of immigrants, including those born in the country, had to reach adulthood in order to apply for citizenship.

The first Integrated Action Plan 2007-2013 for the integration of immigrants titled ‘ESTIA’ was introduced by the Ministry of the Interior in 2007 along with the creation of the General Directorate for Immigration Policy and Social Integration (P.D. 234/2007). The central goals of this action plan were: (a) The inclusion of TCNs versus exclusion. (b) The fight against racism and xenophobia. (c) Providing information and support to documented TCNs in order to enable them to access employment, education, health, and other public goods (Common Ministerial Decision No, 25057/2008). During the same period, the Multi-Annual Programme of the EIF for TCNs (2007-2013) was adopted by the Greek government complementary to the ‘ESTIA’ Programme. Taking EU standards into consideration, its main priorities were to implement the EU Common Principles for the Social Integration of TCNs, with particular emphasis on the development of indicators and methodologies, in order to assess the progress and results of integration measures and policies, to collect statistical data, and create data bases related to integration. Despite its efforts to streamline social integration goals into all relevant policy sectors through the active engagement of local, regional, and national authorities, the Multi-Annual Programme 2007-2013 hardly succeeded in meeting these goals.

The dual crisis of the 2010s

From 2010 onwards, the issue of integration started to become a priority for the Greek state, which was reflected in the policy agenda, mostly as an attempt to address issues of contentious politics rather than as a visionary goal. The Citizenship Law

(3838/2010), making “Current provisions for Greek citizenship and political participation of repatriated Greeks and lawfully resident immigrants and other adjustments”, for the first time granted citizenship to the second generation who either were born in Greece or had been educated through the Greek education system from a young age. The law furthermore recognised the right to vote in local elections for long-term residents.

Once again, history repeated itself when this major reform introduced by the centre-left government proved short-lived. In 2013, the Council of State’s decision (460/2013) ruled two key provisions unconstitutional: facilitation of citizenship acquisition for the second generation and the extension of political rights to migrants (TCNs) at the local level. Local voting rights cannot be extended to those who do not hold Greek citizenship without prior amendments to the Constitution. The decision was a clear reflection of the radical rationale embodied in the characteristic phrase: ‘the Greek is born, not made’ that transcends the respective levels of powers in the country. This, along with the historically unprecedented rise of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party, was believed to endanger the fundamental democratic values in Greece (GEMI 2015).¹⁷ Meanwhile, following pre-election promises, the newly elected government of SYRIZA passed a law (4332/2015) in 2015, which amended the Greek Citizenship Code (Law 4251/2014), enabling second generation TCNs to acquire Greek citizenship. It however introduced stricter conditions compared to Law 3838/2010, increasing the required length of parents’ legal residence, while it also increased the required years of school attendance in Greece from six to nine years for qualification of children for Greek citizenship.

In an attempt to converge the Greek integration approach with relevant EU norms and policies, the National Strategy for the Integration of TCNs was introduced in 2013. The main priorities of the National Strategy include equal access for TCNs, including economic migrants and those granted political asylum or a permit to stay for humanitarian reasons, and their children, to education in the Greek school system; integration in the labour market; the acquisition of a long-term residence status, and the participation of immigrants in policy-making at the local level. These are considered as the most important components of a successful ‘structural integration’, bearing no reference to citizenship as the main means of integration. In order to achieve integration, TCNs would be subjected to the ‘integration programme’, which includes courses aimed at instilling “a positive attitude towards the Greek state with informing them about the basic values of Greek society and the political system” and to promote “the participation of TCNs in the social life of the Greek state, which can only become feasible when the immigrants are sufficiently informed about the way of life, the mores and values of the host society, and only when they accept directly or indirectly the dominant national and

¹⁷ It should be mentioned that until 2010, naturalisation was an extremely difficult process in practice. Based on the principle of *ius sanguinis*, Greek nationality was only granted to ‘repatriated’ migrants of ethnic Greek origin (*homogeneis*), primarily from the countries of the former Soviet Union, through an exceptional and highly flexible procedure. For TCNs or ‘foreigners’ (*allogeneis*), the access and acquisition of Greek citizenship remained a highly intricate process.

European ideology” (GSPSC 2013, p. 54). By rejecting multiculturalism, the emphasis was put on ‘structural integration’ as the representative national model of integration. The main argument used to justify this approach is that TCNs residing legally in Greece are expected to adapt to the dominant political and cultural frame of Greece, with a view to promote “the necessary social cohesion and cultural homogeneity”. It becomes apparent that the latter formulation comes within the concept of assimilation rather than integration, let alone the definition of the term ‘structural integration’. Indeed, the prevailing ambiguity of labelling integration either as ‘structural integration’ or as ‘assimilation’, demonstrates the degree of confusion and vagueness that characterizes the Greek National Strategy on Integration.

A year later, in an attempt to codify all existing legislation and to systemize the chaotic situation created with settled migrants losing their (temporary) legal status as the result of high unemployment rates, Law 4251/2014, the ‘Immigration and Social Integration Code’, came into force in March 2014.¹⁸ The Code brings together all existing legislation, while incorporating EU Directives into the domestic legislation. It also defines and regulates a series of issues such as the categories of residence permits, the conditions for their issuance and renewal, and the rights and obligations attached to them. It however sets very demanding conditions, which are met when a candidate can provide evidence of a sufficient level of Greek language proficiency and knowledge of elements of Greek history and civilization (articles 89-90 of the Code). The level of language acquisition is B1. When applicants fulfil the residence and income criteria, namely continuous legal residence for at least 5 years and sufficient annual income, they are exempted from the requirement to prove ‘sufficient knowledge of the Greek language’, provided that they have been legally residing in Greece for at least 12 years. In the end, however, neither the Strategy (2013), nor the Immigration and Immigrant Integration Code (2014), make any reference to the citizenship as a key component of formal membership in a political community, on the one hand, and immigrants’ right to preserve their distinct cultural-ethnic or religious identity, on the other. Additionally, in the period 2015-2016 Greece was found in the midst of what has been called the most important refugee influx post World War II. Until the first trimester of 2016, most of the arrivals succeeded in leaving Greece via the Balkan Route. Since the closure of borders with FYROM in March 2016, migrants and asylum seekers were increasingly stranded in Greece. In response to this situation, the Greek government adopted a new law (L 4375/2016) in April 2016, designed to reform the ‘old’ procedures (P.D. 112/2010) for processing asylum claims, with the introduction of an exceptional border regime being a very significant point in the amendment of the law. In addition to the legal ratification of what was agreed in the EU-Turkey Agreement, it also introduces several reforms in

¹⁸ According to the explanatory report of Law 4251/2014, integration is conceptualised as the “smooth introduction of TCNs in the Greek society and the recognition from the part of the Greek society of the aim of equal participation in the economic, social and cultural life of the country. TCNs in the process of their integration in the Greek society gain rights, but also acquire responsibilities, similarly to Greek citizens. Their main responsibility is to respect the laws, but also the fundamental values of Greek society”.

the asylum process and international protection, the border regime, first reception, and labour rights of beneficiaries of international protection. The same law (L.4375/2016) provides access to the Greek labour market.

In terms of institutional reforms (P.D. 123/2016), the Ministry of Migration Policy was established in November 2016, and was organized into three main branches: (a) The General Secretariat for Migration Policy (of the former Ministry of Interior and Administration Reconstruction, except for the Directorate of Citizenship that remains at the Ministry of the Interior). (b) The General Secretariat of Reception of the former Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reconstruction. (c) The independent Asylum Service and the independent 'Appeals Authority'.

2.2 Framing the cross-local context: Athens and Vienna

While the migration debate is conducted and framed at the national and supranational (EU) or federal levels, local authorities are becoming increasingly responsible for dealing with the effects of migration and integration of migrants on local societies and economies (KOFF 2002; BALDWIN-EDWARDS 2005). A growing number of studies over the past fifteen years have highlighted the salience of the local government level in confronting the social challenges of multi-ethnic diversity and in implementing measures and practices that are intended to promote the integration of migrants (PENNINX 2010; ALEXANDER 2007; BORKERT et al. 2007).

Local and municipal authorities, alone or in cooperation with other public agencies and non-governmental organisations, are providers of a large scale of social services in the area of health, education, and social and childcare. At the same time, they are also responsible for maintaining the social infrastructure of cities where many ethnic and migrant communities live. Apart from their close contact and better knowledge of local society and conditions on the ground, they tend to be more accommodative and pragmatic towards migrant groups in the formulation and implementation of integration policies in comparison to national, supranational, or federal authorities. This tendency is seemingly inherent to the nature of local government power (POPPELAARS AND SCHOLTEN 2008). Research has shown that local characteristics, initiatives, and arrangements significantly determine the remit of policy opportunities and influence the potential for implementing effective migrant integration policies, notwithstanding variations in national institutional and policy responses to immigrants (ALEXANDER 2007; BOSSWICK et al. 2007).

This chapter addresses the local dimensions of the integration of migrants in an attempt to show why and how local authorities in two different cases, Vienna and Athens, have a newfound and crucial role in designing, managing and implementing integration policies. The starting assumption is that local government institutions have a profound

role in promoting, or conversely hindering, immigrants' integration. Moreover, local government institutions affect immigrants' position in the local society and economy in the course of providing a large array of social services in the local population, as well as in the context of implementing programmes and allocating resources for targeting unemployment, for local development, and for urban regeneration, among others.

2.2.1 Vienna

The "Viennese" system of governance

Vienna is the capital of Austria and one of the nine federal states of Austria. Yet, it is the only metropolitan city in Austria and a federal province at the same time (FASSMANN et al. 2010, p. 9). In terms of demography, Vienna is by far the largest city in Austria with 1.897.491¹⁹ inhabitants 2019, while the population of the second largest city, Graz, does not exceed 280,000 inhabitants. In terms of ideological orientation, the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) has dominated Viennese local government since the 1920s (FASSMANN et al. 2010, p. 9; FASSMANN and KOHLBACHER 2008, p. 11). It is no coincidence that the 'Red Vienna' is considered an international model of governance. The traditional core of the political and administrative system in Vienna was constructed as a sort of universalistic welfare state tailored to local conditions (FASSMANN and KOHLBACHER 2008, p. 12). At the same time, Vienna's consensually oriented political culture is rooted in the concept of 'social partnership', which is a specific Austrian form of corporatism, reflected in involving the interests of social partners in decision-making (FASSMANN et al. 2010, p. 9).

In terms of competences and power structures, the Mayor of Vienna is also governor of the federal province. The City Council acts as a provincial diet, while the City Senate serves a double function as the City and Provincial Government (FASSMANN and KOHLBACHER 2008, p. 11). Yet, the City Councillors are part of the City Senate and politically responsible for specific areas (planning, environment, health, housing, etc.). In general, the political priorities have been formulated as the outcome of a consultation process involving several political and civil society actors. As such they reflect the diversity of interests and tend to portray integration as a cross-cutting topic (MOURÃO-PERMOSER and ROSENBERGER 2012, p. 50).

Austria as a federal state has granted its provinces a certain degree of autonomy, in particular in the field of education and social policy (PERCHINIG 2012, p. 4). In this context, Vienna enjoys the freedom to develop its own approach on immigration and integration, autonomously and regardless of central policies (FASSMANN and KOHLBACHER 2008, p. 6). In this particular context, integration was established as a policy field on the regional and local level quite some time before the federal state developed integration policies and institutions at national level. In fact, it became an important political issue

¹⁹ See Statistik Austria, Berechnung MA 23 (<<https://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/bevoelkerung/tabellen/bevoelkerung-bez-zr.html>>).

at the local and provincial level already in the 1990s, whereas at the national level it has been institutionalized as a distinct policy domain (involving political responsibilities and specialised institutions) only at the beginning of the 2010s (Interview no. 6, Vienna). Until then, integration was a highly controversial topic between the Ministries of the Interior and regional and local governments, with the former emphasizing security issues, and the latter focusing on social integration and anti-discrimination. The long-standing commitment of the City/Province of Vienna to adopt a more pro-active policy in the area of immigrant integration than its national counterpart stands in particularly striking contrast to national-level politics (MOURÃO-PERMOSER and ROSENBERGER 2012, p. 49). General politics on migration are to a high degree determined by national legislation, whereas special policies focusing on diversity and peaceful co-existence in the urban context are usually developed and implemented by local governments (FASSMANN and KOHLBACHER 2008, p. 6).

Vienna: a historical city of immigration

Like other metropolises, Vienna is a city of immigration. It can look back on a long-standing tradition of cultural and linguistic diversity, since Vienna attracted many people of a multi-ethnic conglomerate when it was the capital of the Habsburg Empire (FASSMANN and KOHLBACHER 2008, p. 8). The migrant composition of Vienna's population can be attributed to a cascade of international developments divided in six phases (STADTWIEN 2017, p. 8; FASSMANN and KOHLBACHER 2008, p. 8).

1. The immigration of guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s from Turkey and then Yugoslavia;
2. Since 1989, the massive immigration from Eastern Europe and the Balkan countries emerging from the dissolution of the Soviet bloc and former Yugoslavia;
3. The Austrian accession to the EC in 1995;
4. Increased immigration inflows from new EU Member States in 2004 and 2007 respectively;
5. The end of transition periods for the free movement of workers in 2011 and 2014, and
6. The 2015 refugee crisis setting out from the Middle East.

Between 1991 and 2011, the city of Vienna experienced a sharp increase in the number of its foreign residents. During the 1990s, labour migrants from former communist countries, refugees from former Yugoslavia, and family members of former guest workers mainly constituted the immigration population (KOHLBACHER et al. 2014, p. 17). During the same period, the number of immigrants from Romania and Bulgaria had almost tripled along with a considerable increase of Slovakian, Polish and German citizens (KOHLBACHER et al. 2014, p. 38). It is no coincidence that the number of foreign residents in Vienna increased from 16% in 2001 to 21.5% in 2011. This was in sharp contrast to the situation on a national level, where the number of foreign residents

had increased only from 8.8% in 2001 to 11.0 % in 2011 (KOHLBACHER et al. 2014, p. 12). Since 2006, Vienna's population has grown by 11% from 1,652,449 to 1,840,226 (STADTWIEN 2017, p. 8). In 2017, 534,532 foreign citizens were living in Vienna, which was 29% of the total population. The majority are third-country nationals, comprising 16.4% of the total immigrant population of Vienna, while 12.2% are EU/EFTA citizens. In total, 45.3% of all foreign residents in Vienna originate from former Yugoslavia (Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia) and Turkey. Germany (10.4%) is the third most important sending country, with Eastern Europe playing an important role too (i.e. Poland 9.7%).

Integration and diversity policies in Vienna

Before the 1990s, the City of Vienna did not have an explicit integration or diversity policy (PERCHINIG 2012). The first attempts to develop such municipal infrastructure reach back to the 1970s, when the *Zuwandererfonds* was founded (in 1973) to assist labour migrants from other provinces, but also from abroad, to manage life in Vienna, and in particular to find adequate housing (PERCHINIG 2012, p. 37). Faced with the rapid increase of the migration population at the end of the 1980s, the City of Vienna started to turn away from considering immigration a temporary phenomenon, to viewing it as a permanent phenomenon. At the beginning of the 1990s, the City of Vienna started to implement its first integration policies. In this context, the Viennese Integration Fund (*Wiener Integrationsfonds* – WIF) was founded in 1992. Under the slogan 'We are all Vienna', the WIF had been tasked with: (a) Improving German language skills among immigrants through language courses. (b) Organising and managing mother tongue/native language classes in schools. (c) Implementing policy measures towards the improvement of the labour market integration of immigrants. (d) Establishing and expanding advisory and information centres for immigrants across the city (KOHLBACHER et al. 2014, p. 21).

In 1996, the first Councillor of Integration Affairs was appointed as the head of the respective administrative department initiated the first integration policies. One year later, the City Councillor was assigned as the head of the newly established Office for Integration Affairs of the City Council. This move was considered the first crucial step towards mainstreaming integration policies. A few years later, at the beginning of the 2000s, the City of Vienna initiated a paradigm shift from a stringent focus on integration to a discourse on achieving integration through diversity. The substantial change within the city and its administrative bodies was that integration was no longer perceived as an achievement to be accomplished by immigrants, but rather as a process that includes immigrants as well as the members and institutions of the Viennese 'host society' (KOHLBACHER et al. 2014, p. 45). It was the first time that Viennese politicians and the municipality itself explicitly articulated the active (and pro-active) role that the (urban) host society should play in terms of 'integrating the diversity', where ethnic diversity is perceived as the norm, rather than as an exception.

The principle of equality lay at the heart of the new diversity concept of the City of Vienna, and the term ‘integration’ highlighted the effort to foster processes of inclusion and to increase the participation of immigrants in all relevant areas of life. According to the ‘Guidelines of the Integration and Diversity Policy of the City of Vienna’, the core principles of the Viennese diversity concept are: (a) Equal opportunities and participation of all residents in important spheres of life. (b) Facilitating access to relevant resources for everyone. (c) Abolishing discrimination tendencies. (d) Increasing mutual respect. (e) Increasing empowerment (STADTWIEN 2017, p. 7). The Viennese Fund for Integration was dissolved in 2004 and the Department for Integration and Diversity was founded within the administrative structure of the city. In July 2004, the Municipal Department 17 (MA 17) for Integration and Diversity Affairs was established with the task of further developing integration and diversity measures and assisting the municipality in mainstreaming and adjusting its services to the needs of Vienna’s increasingly diverse population (FASSMANN and KOHLBACHER 2008, p. 12; KOHLBACHER et al. 2014, p. 45). In fact, three similar regional offices operate throughout Austria, which work in close cooperation with local communities, focusing particularly on youth and the second generation, towards mainstreaming diversity at the local level (Interview no. 6, Vienna).

In line with its priorities, a large part of the budget of the MA 17 is allocated to funding German courses that are usually implemented by various specialized educational institutions, while also covering a part of participants’ fees (Interview no. 6, Vienna). It furthermore financially supports integration activities organised by various NGOs, which for instance may offer professional education to young migrants, help them to get qualifications accredited, and obtain access either to the labour market or to further education (Interview no. 6, Vienna). Another institutional step forward was the introduction of the Viennese anti-discrimination law, in 2004 (amended in 2012), which bans any kind of discrimination on racial, ethnic, religious, ideological or sexual grounds.

In principle, the City of Vienna’s integration policies aim at achieving equal rights and chances in all areas of life. This liberal and progressive approach however has brought about repeated controversies between Vienna and the federal government, as the former has repeatedly adopted a critical position towards national regulations (FASSMANN and KOHLBACHER 2008, p. 14). This was even more problematic as long as the integration policy had not been institutionally established at a national level until 2011²⁰, which means that Vienna was leading the way with its integration policy in Austria. While the legal competencies for migration and integration in Austria clearly rest at the federal level, there have been continuous struggles between federal bodies, specifically the Ministry of the Interior, and provincial institutions to agree on a common integration approach. Against this backdrop, the City of Vienna has opted to emphasise the positive side of diversity as a counter-model to the policy of the Ministry of the Interior, which was focused on restrictive measures along with the assimilation approach

²⁰ Until then, the Ministry of the Interior had been responsible for integration, but there had not been any separate body solely responsible for integration.

in the field of integration. As a result, the City of Vienna established its own commission on immigration and integration, which presented its first report in 2010. The city also promoted an Expert Committee on Integration within the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns established in 2008 as an alternative forum for coordinating integration activities of larger cities and municipalities (KRALER 2011, p. 48).

In 2007, the City of Vienna introduced the Integration and Diversity Monitoring Scheme, which is a tool that enables the ongoing monitoring of levels of integration²¹ and illustrates the quality of the city administration's diversity management (STADTWIEN 2017, p. 3). At the same time, the diversity approach has resulted in increased attention to an 'intercultural opening' of the City's administration. As a part of the campaign to promote diversity mainstreaming, the City of Vienna's public administration opened up its services and re-orientated its programmes in response to the needs and necessities of the increasingly diversified urban population. In order to achieve such a goal, the City of Vienna began to train their employees in intercultural communication and increased the number of employees with a migration background (KOHLBACHER et al. 2014, p. 42). In 2013, 25% of city employees were of foreign origin.

Housing policy²² has been progressively regionalized since the 1980s, while direct housing property ownership of the local authority along with residential building by non-profit housing associations has played an important role in shaping the human geography of the city. In fact, the City of Vienna is not only the largest owner of properties in Austria but also in Europe, with a considerable number of City residences being built during the 1920s and 1930s and largely newly renovated. Although socio-economic and ethnic segregation remain low, there is some concentration of certain migrant groups (such as the former so-called 'guest workers' from Turkey and former Yugoslavia) in certain predominantly working-class areas located around the city centre. In some cases, the population with a migration background accounts for more than 50% of the local population in those areas (KOHLBACHER et al. 2014, p. 38).

In conclusion, the City of Vienna plays a more important role with regard to integration and diversity programmes than the federal government. Indeed, it has been the forerunner of integration policies in Austria (PERCHINIG 2012, p. 37), while 'Red Vienna' is historically considered a social democratic city with a strong welfare profile. From an intra-provincial perspective, Vienna is again far ahead of other provinces, the latter sharing neither the same political structure with Vienna, nor the budget allocated to integration policies (Interview no. 6, Vienna). More importantly, while in other cities/provinces integration is usually part of the social and family affairs department, and not an autonomous one, the city of Vienna has its own department (MA 17) with its own staff of 60 persons and its own budget (Interview no. 6, Vienna). Vienna's integration

²¹ For the City of Vienna, the diversity policy means promoting participation on equal terms, supporting adaption processes as required by institutions, opening access to resources of society, countering discrimination, and developing strategies for strengthening and opening society for diversity (STADTWIEN 2017, p. 5).

²² For several decades, Austrian housing policy was based on corporatist 'social partnership'.

policy has traditionally been characterised by efforts to overcome conflicts, and social cohesion and ‘integration’ are hence firmly established as both objectives and points of reference for the city’s urban policy (FASSMANN and KOHLBACHER 2008, p. 28). From this perspective, migrants are perceived as subject to integration immediately on arrival and settling in the city – this is called ‘integration from day one’, except for humanitarian migrants as long as their legal status is pending (Interview no. 10, Vienna).

However, ‘integration’ at the local level tends to be framed rather as a social matter and a matter of equal opportunities, which means that the primary aim of local integration policies is to maintain social cohesion and social peace. As such, individuals with a migration background that acquire Austrian citizenship are no longer considered as a target group of specific socio-political measures, but rather as Viennese citizens and a regular part of the local population. Nevertheless, despite the emphasis on equal access and equal participation, this is practically not possible in cases in which full access to certain social and political rights is directly dependent on legal status (e.g. political participation at local level). The City of Vienna however is attempting to improve the access and participation at local level, regardless of legal status (Interview no. 6, Vienna). The same approach is applied when it comes to the monitoring methodology of measuring integration indicators. What is measured and compared is the socio-economic mobility (upward or downward) of the entire society, rather than of the foreign population divided along ethnic lines (Interview no. 6, Vienna). This is based on the principle that integration takes place beyond and regardless of ethnic lines and cultural background. What matters is the legal status, which in the end enables the degree of access and socio-economic integration. Whenever the difference in legal status is applied, the outcome of performance and participation would automatically vary. According to this approach, the statistical data is not and should not be allowed to become ‘culturalized’ (Interview no. 6, Vienna).

2.2.2 Athens

The City of Athens is the capital of and the largest municipality in Greece. Being part of a 3.75 million people metropolis, the Municipality of Athens has approximately 700,000 residents (OECD 2018). Migrants and their native-born children account for 23% of Athens’ population, while the number of refugees and asylum seekers has rapidly increased since 2015. In the period of 2014-2015 alone, 500,000 asylum seekers and migrants crossed through the city of Athens on their journey to Western Europe. By the end of 2016, about 60,000 refugees and immigrants were recorded as living in Greece (OECD 2018, p. 15), while in Athens their number is estimated at around 20,000 (OECD and EU 2018). In total, 170,000 foreign citizens from around 170 countries lived in the metropolitan region of Athens in August 2018 (GREEK MINISTRY OF MIGRATION 2018). The ethnic composition is quite unbalanced with Albanians representing 51% of the total migrant population in the city. Other important groups from the Balkans

and Eastern Europe represented more than 15%, while migrant groups from Southern Asia represent over 11%. Other minor groups represent 2.8%, and include people from Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, and China, which is considerably more than in the period of 2001-2011.

Migration typology and urban patterns of integration

Athens has experienced two large waves of migrant and refugee flows. First, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Iron Curtain, at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the City of Athens experienced a massive influx of economic migrants coming mostly from the neighbouring countries of the Balkans. The fact that the foreign population living in Athens recorded a 463.91% increase between 1991 and 2011 is highly illustrative.

At the beginning of the 2010s, the City of Athens was faced with another phenomenon, namely the gradual increase in the number of humanitarian migrants who did not intend to settle in Greece, but rather to move to other Western European countries. Until March 2016, the majority of migrants who arrived in Greece by crossing the Aegean Sea headed north, via the Balkan Route, to seek asylum in Western EU countries. Athens' city squares and parks were transformed overnight in meeting points and makeshift places of accommodation for thousands of refugees. The City of Athens, with very limited infrastructure in place and no experience in dealing with phenomena of such a scale, suddenly found itself at the forefront of the biggest refugee movement since World War II in Europe (MUNICIPALITY OF ATHENS 2017, p. 31). Following the closure of the Balkan corridor in March 2016, migrants and asylum seekers largely remained stranded in the Greek capital. In the absence of any inclusion policy, the burden was informally shifted to the Municipality of Athens, which was forced almost overnight to accommodate a large migrant population, concentrated particularly in and around Athens (GEDDES and SCHOLTEN 2016, p. 222). In general, the city has been experiencing profound socio-economic and socio-spatial changes during the past two and a half decades. As was already elaborated in section 2.1.2, a key characteristic of migration to Greece in the 1990s was its spatial concentration in urban areas, particularly in Athens and Thessaloniki. This, in conjunction with the prevailing irregular employment in the informal sector, created "a prototype for the trends towards informalisation of work and the increased social inequality and restructuring of consumption into high-income and very low-income strata" (IOSIFIDES and KING 1998, p. 223).

Putting this into context, the particular features of the Greek case are associated with the position of Athens within the wider national space. In fact, the human geography of the migrant population in Athens follows a similar concentration-decentralization model than that of the native population. Thus, according to the statistical data of the Ministry of Migration Policy (2018), approximately 45% (240,467 people) of the overall immigrant population in Greece (540,260) is spatially concentrated in the greater area of Athens (Attika region). Despite the high concentration of immigrants in the region of Attica, studies have shown that Athens is one of the most pluralistic European metropo-

lises (ARAPOGLOU 2008, p. 1). The same observation is supported by other studies, which maintain that migrants are sparsely settled in the city, and despite the existence of small concentrations, there are no ghettos (VAIOU 2007). Researchers have identified urban patterns of interaction both within migrant groups, and between immigrants and the native population (GEMI 2017, p. 176). This picture is likely to be in line with what is described as a form of bottom-up integration taking place in the neighbourhoods of Athens (VAIOU 2007). Integration of migrants in urban life has been made possible through informal practices and arrangements, which are structural components of urban development and characterize Athens in many respects (VAIOU and STRATIGAKI 2008, p. 124). However, as was said above, informality is a key variable of social integration. It should be added that this phenomenon is not exclusive to migrants. It also affects locals and it can be found at the basis of the settings of urban experience and everyday life in the city. On the other hand, spatial proximity does not necessarily mean a reduction of social distances that may lead to mitigation of inequalities. Despite the spatial/residential proximity to the native population, migrants live in substandard housing conditions and often do not have access to public facilities and infrastructures as Greek citizens do (ARAPOGLOU et al. 2009).

At the same time, there are significant differences among ethnic immigrant groups in terms of their spatial distribution/concentration within the urban area of the capital. For instance, Albanian migrants have a high residential mobility and seem to share the same residential areas with Greeks, a fact that contributes to the low levels of spatial segregation (ARAPOGLOU 2008). Contrary to that, migrants from Eastern Europe and Asia are usually concentrated in smaller communities and segregation is slightly evident, mostly in the case of unskilled workers (ARAPOGLOU 2006, p. 29). All in all, the experiences of migrants in their continued efforts to make their way into the social and symbolic aspects of everyday life is part of the urban identity of Athens and not a matter of ethnic group formation in the city (VAIOU and STRATIGAKI 2008, p.128). The dynamics of the urban geography of Athens as shaped by multi-faceted socio-economic relations are reflected in the changing mosaic of local infrastructure and services, the intensive use of public spaces, and the multiple traces of new and long-settled city dwellers.

The institutional context of local governance of integration

Migration and integration policy as well as the reception mechanisms for refugees and asylum seekers are the responsibility of the national authorities in a highly centralized country such as Greece (OECD 2018, p. 32). The structures of the Greek state consist of three levels of governance: the central, the regional, and the local level. The regional governmental level includes 13 regions, with regional councils and governors elected by popular vote every five years. Similarly, at the local level (that consists of 325 municipalities) both its municipal councils and mayors are elected by popular vote every five years. Despite repeated efforts to decentralize the local level, Greece continues to be characterized by a high degree of state centralism (ANAGNOSTOU et al. 2016, p. 46; OECD 2018, p. 33), as is illustrated in the case of Law 2910/2001. This law gave

municipal authorities competences in the implementation of regularisation programmes for migrants, but without assigning any role concerning issues of integration. Thus, the municipal administration was simply responsible for receiving residence permit applications and for the issuing and renewal of residence permits. In fact, since the 1990s the role of Municipalities has been limited and conditioned either by the national law on migration, and/or by providing services to the local population, including migrants, something that varies significantly depending on the local administration's discretion (OECD 2018, p. 35). In an attempt to broaden the scope of municipalities' responsibilities, the Code of Communes and Municipalities (Law 3463/2006, Art. 75) introduced the proper legal frame regarding migrants' integration at a local level, while maintaining the previous competences on issuing and renewing residence permits. In 2010, however, the above competences were repealed and transferred to the regional administration. The rationale behind the decision lay in the assumption that the issuing of residence permits is and should be an exclusive prerogative of the national state rather than of local government (ANAGNOSTOU et al. 2016, p. 62).

The major reform process of the territorial, administrative, and local government structures was the introduction of Law 3852/2010, called 'New Architecture of Local Government and Decentralized Administration', also known as project 'Kallikratis'. It came into effect in 2011. The reform reorganized local and decentralized public administration by transferring new responsibilities and competences to municipalities. The 'Kallikratis' reform increased the competences of municipalities in the sphere of social policy. Following the paradigm of other municipality structures in various EU countries, it particularly gives emphasis to the provision of social services such as the protection of elderly people, support for families and vulnerable groups, and the tackling of social exclusion and marginalization of the poor, including migrants and uninsured individuals (SKAMNAKIS 2011, p. 8). Together with the Law (3852/2010) regarding the participation of citizens, it introduced significant measures intended to promote the political and civic participation of immigrants at the local level. The most important institutional achievement was the establishment of Migrant Integration Councils (MICs) in every municipality. Even though they have no decision-making powers, they are assigned with the tasks of informing the municipal government about the problems that migrants face within a specific local context, of presenting proposals for actions furthering the integration of migrants, and of assisting migrants in accessing regional and municipal services. The councils would serve as a connecting bridge between municipal authorities and migrant communities. It is worth mentioning, however, that the MICs were initially designed as a local institutional body for migrants who would enjoy voting rights and elect their own representatives in local municipal councils. Following the suspension of political rights at local level by the Council of State in 2013, the role and the mission of MICs has however been undermined in practice (ANAGNOSTOU 2016, p. 34).

The economic crisis that hit the country during 2009-2010 has had serious implications, particularly regarding social policy, which is crucial for the integration of

migrants. Therefore, no systematic Greek language courses are organised at national or municipal level any more.²³ Another factor that has further complicated the role of municipalities in migration and integration matters was the culmination of the refugee crisis in 2015-2016. Until 2015, the Municipality had one employee working on migrant issues and administrative support of the Migrant Integration Council (Interview no. 12, Athens). As a response to the refugee peak, the current mayor of Athens appointed a Vice-Mayor for Migrants and Refugees in February 2016. Following his appointment, a Department of Support and Social Integration of Migrants and Refugees was created within the Directorate of Social Solidarity and Health in November 2016 (OECD 2018).

In summary, the involvement of the Municipality of Athens with migrant integration has grown over the past eight years, and it has assumed a more active role than in the past. However, as key informants have stated, no clear aim of integration has been defined, resulting in the application of incoherent multiple policies (Interviews no. 2 and 11, Athens). In addition, there is no official long-term planning, but only problem-solving policies. According to the deputy Mayor of Athens, integration remains at a conceptual level in terms of state policies, and no implementation has taken place yet (Interview no. 11, Athens). Finally, a significant challenging factor is the rising anti-immigrant rhetoric and the rising electoral power of the extremist right-wing party *Chrysi Avgi* (Golden Dawn). It has voiced strong anti-immigrant positions, and it has engaged in a variety of violent and aggressive actions against immigrants.

²³ Between 2008 and 2011, the Ministry of Education and the General Secretary of Lifelong Learning and the New Generation implemented the 'Odysseas' programme, which funded 320 places for the learning of the Greek language, history, and culture. The programme was designed to give the participants the necessary knowledge to reach the level required for the status of 'long term resident' and to participate in the relevant exams certifying this knowledge (OECD 2018, p. 58). Due to a lack of public language classes, NGOs and religious organisations now cover the cost of such language courses.

3 Albanian migration in Greece and Austria: exploring the links between integration and transnationalism

3.1 *Migration patterns of Albanians in Greece and Austria*

Since the 1990s, Albania has witnessed one of the greatest and most dramatic migration flows in its history. Pictures of desperate Albanians ‘breaking the walls’ of Western embassies or of desperate Albanian refugees piled into crowded, rusty ships to escape a country spiralling into political and economic chaos became part of the iconography of global migration in the 1990s (KING and MAI 2008).

Over a million Albanians (about 27.5% of the total Albanian population and 35% of the active population) migrated abroad. In 2017, Albania had about 1.5 million citizens outside its territory, amounting to about one third of the country’s population (INSTAT 2017a).²⁴ The majority of Albanian migrants are settled in the neighbouring countries of Italy (455,468) and Greece (429,428) (UNDESA 2017), however with a growing trend of presence in other European Union countries as well as in North America (USA and Canada). The sudden massive migration outflows that occurred as the country moved almost overnight from absolute isolation to large-scale migration, the ratio of the number of emigrants to the country’s population, and the typology of these moves make Albania a significant and unique case on the migration map of the world (KING and VULLNETARI 2009; VULLNETARI and KING 2011).

The ‘uniqueness’ of Albanian migration is further characterised by the fact that it has been directed almost exclusively towards two neighbouring countries: Greece and Italy (LABRIANIDIS and KAZAZI 2006). In stressing that for most Albanians, migration was the only possible way to survive an economic crisis (as a consequence of the wider post-communist political transformation of the country), BARJABA and PERRONE (1996, p. 133) use the phrase ‘migration of economic refugees’, whilst VAN HEAR (1998) refers to a new migration order. KING (2005) goes a step further by pointing out that emigration from Albania represents a unique laboratory for the study of migration and development. The exceptionality of Albanian migration consists in: (a) Guaranteeing the economic survival of Albanian society. (b) Its overall magnitude in relation to the size of the Albanian population. (c) Its sudden and forceful emergence after fifty years of internal mobility restrictions and international isolation. (d) Its interconnection with internal migration, and the emergence of trafficking and organised crime (MAI 2003, p. 940). However, the fundamental need to improve economic well-being through migration cannot be separated from the aspiration of Albanians to seek a socio-political alternative to a fifty year authoritarian regime. From this perspective, Albanian migration can be seen as an

²⁴ According to INSTAT, the average population numbered 2,873,457 in 2017. The difference between the data registered in the National Civil Status Register and the average population for 2017 can be estimated as an indirect indicator of the number of Albanian citizens living abroad.

intrinsically political act that challenged the model of personhood that was consistent with the principles of communist dictatorship (MAI 2001).

Today, emigration of Albanian citizens, in particular toward European Union (EU) countries, continues despite the constant improvement of living conditions in the country, a net stable growth of the Albanian economy, and constant improvement of public safety (RoA 2017). This is also confirmed by the fact that the number of Albanian citizens who applied for asylum in EU Member States (11,040 in 2013; 12,295 in 2014) have been largely growing during 2014-2017. According to INSTAT (2017b), five factors are estimated to currently influence emigration toward the EU. These include the opportunity to work abroad (84%), family reunification (4.6%), followed by the unemployment in Albania (4.2%), opportunity to study abroad (3.5%), and other factors (3.6%). Additional pull factors are higher quality of training and educational opportunities abroad. In turn, weaknesses of public institutions and public services have served as push factors negatively affecting migrants' efforts and perspectives to return and settle in Albania.

On the other hand, the significant impact of the large-scale migration on the country's social and economic development should be taken into consideration. Remittances have long helped to overcome poverty in the aftermath of the communist regime and for many years continued to make an important contribution to the Albanian economy. Although Albania continues to be heavily dependent on remittances, the inflows gradually declined during the economic crisis in Southern Europe from the peak of EUR 952 million in 2007 to EUR 547 million in 2013. Since then the levels have recovered to reach EUR 637 million in 2017 and are expected to rise further with the return of growth in host countries (Greece and Italy), providing migrant households and local economies with an extraordinary and irreplaceable source of finance (GOVERNMENT OF ALBANIA and IOM 2018).

3.1.1 Albanian migration in Greece

Since the 1990s, Albanians have constituted the largest migrant community in Greece. Official data refers to 362,825 Albanians (out of 520,260 TCNs, or 67% of the total migrant population) staying legally in Greece (GREEK MINISTRY OF MIGRATION POLICY 2018). During the 1990s, immigration from Albania was predominantly irregular with most of the immigrants being men, later followed by their spouses and children. The Presidential Decree 359/1997 introduced the first regularization programme for irregular immigrants in Greece. During the first phase of implementation, two-thirds (241,561) of immigrants who were regularized were from Albania. The efforts to regularize the immigrant population along with the branding of deportations as 'irregular' resulted in the decrease of irregular immigration from Albania. Furthermore, the stricter border controls associated with immigrants and the insistence of the Greek state that immigrants contribute to social insurance contributed to the permanent stay of Albanian immigrants in Greece (BALDWIN-EDWARDS 2004, p. 62).

Since 2000, faced with the large scale of (irregular) migration, the Greek state realized, albeit rather belatedly, that migration had become a permanent feature and that migrants were there to stay for good. Thus, it passed two consecutive laws, 2910/2001 and 3386/2005, which adopted new regularization programmes and most importantly for the first time introduced the issue of social integration of immigrants. Toward the end of the 2000s, the socio-economic integration of Albanians finally started to be institutionalized and to become established. After years of being subject to a very particular regime of semi-regularity, the number of long-term residents and naturalized Greek citizens had shown relative growth by the beginning of the 2010s (MINISTRY OF MIGRATION POLICY 2018).

The 2010s gave rise to a new configuration of Albanian migration in Greece, differing from that of the 1990s and 2000s. It consisted of national and supranational institutional developments such as visa liberalization, a new migration and integration law passed in 2014, and the introduction of an EU long-term residence permit. Systemic features such as a restructuring of the labour markets of Greece hit by the economic crisis added to the endogenous dynamics of migratory flows. More concretely, Albanians had long struggled to overcome irregularity and largely managed to do so, had it not been for the 2008 economic crisis that hit Greece and thus left many among them unemployed. The de-regularisation of male wage earners, particularly those working in the construction sector, often led to entire families losing their legal status. In addition, protracted unemployment of men and a reduction of work/income for women made living in Greece economically unsustainable to many. The transition in which Albanians found themselves to a degree reversed the process of integration. At the same time, the application of the long-term validity of residence permits adopted by the Greek government in 2014, albeit with significant delay, granted Albanian migrants the opportunity to return to Albania or to move elsewhere (within the Schengen area) with the option of regularly returning to Greece when work is available. In contrast, Albanian migrants with temporary residence permits (which numerically were the majority) were faced with serious difficulties in renewing their residence permits due to unemployment and financial hardships in Greece. As few immigrants had secured permanent residence and equal rights under Greece's rigid and restrictive residence policies, many of them have lost their jobs, their legal status and therefore their basic social entitlements.

Since their socio-economic relations and stay must be re-evaluated, they came under pressure to re-establish or strengthen ties to their networks in Albania or elsewhere, because of the need to face the consequences of the crisis, while return flows increasingly prevailed (GEMI 2015, p. 36). A study carried out by the IOM and INSTAT (2014) recorded 133,544 returns in the 2009-2013 period alone. The majority of returns were voluntary and concerned Albanian migrants who had previously been in Greece (70.8%) and Italy (23.7%), whilst the main reasons for return was the loss of a job in the country of destination (NESTURI 2014, p. 10). Based on anecdotal evidence, KING (2017) highlights that the severe economic crisis in Greece has caused a significant return flow, which in turn has led to a significant reduction in the 'stock' of Albanians in Greece

(ibid., p. 18). However, the returnees' trajectory is not seen as the end of the migration project *per se* or as a failure either. It has often involved skilled migrants and entire families who have lost their place on the Greek labour market. At the same time, circular and transnational movements for seasonal workers and often also informal employment in specific sectors of the economy (e.g., agriculture and tourism) have emerged as the most frequent means by which the migration of Albanians to Greece takes place (GEMI 2013). In addition, studies (i.e. GEMI 2015) have shown that a significant number of Albanians seems to reconsider their stay in both countries and many are heading back to Albania or moving towards other industrial countries of Western Europe with the aim of finding employment opportunities there. Today, after almost three decades of immigration experience, in the context of the economic crisis and at the different cross-roads at which these three countries stand before the EU, the options of return, transnational and circular migration, and re-migration become all the more important on the agenda of the Albanian migrant household. In this context, the interplay of and interconnectedness between being settled and being mobile unfold, regardless of the lack of targeted integration and/or re-integration policies at a governmental and/or intergovernmental level in Greece and Albania.

Lastly, as far as integration patterns are concerned, the integration trajectory of Albanians in Greece is that of *partial integration*, which comes as a result of the *differential exclusion* and the non-interventionist integration policies implemented until the end of the 2000s (GEMI 2017, p. 257). Albanians, in response, seem to have adopted a strategy characterized as '*mimesis*' (PALADINI 2014, p. 112) or in more politically correct terms *assimilation* (through *mimesis*). In a way, Albanians have persistently sought to blur into the Greek social fabric, making themselves as invisible as possible by changing their names (as it happened in Greece) and religious identity (if any had existed). The term *asymmetric assimilation* adopted by KING and MAI (2008, p. 117) emphasizes the paradox of a community which is at the same time the most stigmatized and the most integrated and similar to the population of the host country (PALADINI 2014, p. 112).

3.1.2 Albanian migration in Austria

The Western Balkans is an extremely important source region for Austrian immigration. Indeed, the largest migration population in Austria is from the Western Balkans, with Serbia (181,700), Bosnia and Herzegovina (94,000) and the Former Yug. Rep. of Macedonia (21,700) ranking among the 15 top nationalities in the country in 2015 (OECD 2017). Due to its historical position (having been the former centre of the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Monarchy), Austria has traditionally hosted large influxes of populations mostly from the Balkans. The recent high numbers are mainly an outcome of economically motivated former guest-worker immigration, which started during the early 1960s and intensified during the early 1970s. An additional factor was the high numbers of Bosnian refugees moving to Austria during and after the Bosnian

War of 1992-95. In the period of 2004-2013 alone, Austria had shown a migration surplus of 337,000 people, 138,000 of whom were from the Western Balkan countries, thus representing 41% of the net migration (FASSMANN 2017, p. 127). During the same period, a total number of 2,961 migrants from Albania have registered as legal residents in Austria (STATISTIK AUSTRIA 2018). Since 2002, the number of Albanian legal residents in Austria has risen by 52.5% (from 1,833 in 2002 to 3,861 in 2017) (ibid.). Again, according to STATISTIK AUSTRIA (2018), in 2017, 3,861 registered foreigners had been born in Albania, while 2,378 were Albanian citizens.

From a community perspective, the total number of Albanians (both from Kosovo and from Albania) in Austria is estimated at approximately 80,000 people, of whom more than 35,000 are settled in Vienna (Interviews no. 1, 3 and 9, Vienna). According to estimated data provided to the Albanian Embassy in Austria by Albanian migrants' associations in the country, the distribution of the Albanian population in Austria (citizens of the Republic of Albania) is configured as follows:

Table 1: **Estimated numbers of Albanians in Austrian Federal Provinces**²⁵

A/A	Federal provinces	Estimated numbers of Albanians living in Austria ²⁵
1	Vienna and suburbs	20,000 – 35,000
2	Styria	20,000
3	Upper Austria	15,000
4	Salzburg	7,000
5	Tyrol	2,000-3,000
6	Carinthia	1,500
7	Lower Austria	500
8	Burgenland	500
	Total	81,600

Source: Author's compilation based on data provided by Interviews no. 1 and 3, Vienna; numbers for Vorarlberg were not available

However, in the opinion of the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are about 2,800-4,000 Albanians (only from Albania) that are actually accommodated in Vienna (Interview no. 1, Vienna). An estimated 18,500 people of Albanian origin are registered in voters' lists for the electoral constituency of Vienna's local government (Interview no. 3, Vienna). In comparison to Greece, the number of Albanian migrants in Austria is very small. Nevertheless, what makes the comparison interesting is the typology of migration patterns and the human geography of Albanian migration to Austria.

²⁵ There are no clear statistics on the exact number of Albanians originating from the state of Albania. These numbers rather reflect the number of ethnic Albanians (mainly from Kosovo and North Macedonia) living in Austria.

In terms of migration patterns, Albanian migration in Austria and more specifically in Vienna is linked to the historical and political, economic and cultural ties between the two countries at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. It is no coincidence that during the emigration exodus in 1990-1991, the first Albanians who settled in Vienna were politically persecuted descendants of former powerful Albanian families of bey²⁶, for instance those of Eqerem Bej Vlora and Ali Kelcyra (Interview no. 4, Vienna). Their strong ties with the Austrian establishment, particularly during the realms of the *Erste Republik Österreich* and *Ständestaat*, were deeply rooted in the geography, (i.e. Austria as a hub between west and east, and Albania located at the heart of the Balkans), as well as in economic and geopolitical interests, including the banking sector. At the same time, the universities of Vienna and Graz, respectively, have been traditionally qualified as the best tertiary educational institutions in Europe that have hosted Albanian academics and students as early as the 1920s. Even at the beginning of the 1990s, the first flows of Albanians predominantly had an intellectual background.

Today, Albanian students are numerically a very significant group, not only in relation to the Albanian community, but also compared to the overall student community in Austria. More than 2,000 Albanian students study at various Austrian universities (Interview no. 3, Vienna). Meanwhile, Albania is ranked among the top eight countries with a large number of university students in Austria (BIFEL 2018, p. 75). The international mobility of students, graduates, as well as scientific and artistic university staff is deemed to play a very important role in the internationalization of Austrian higher education institutions. Furthermore, the government has sought to ease the conditions for international students from third countries to remain in the country upon graduation from an Austrian higher education institution and search for a job (MUSIL and REYHANI 2012, p. 11). On the other hand, in the framework of the Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies (CEEPUS)²⁷, there is an agreement between the governments of the Republic of Austria and the Republic of Albania on scientific and technological co-operation (MUSIL and REYHANI 2012, p. 67).

Following the economic recession in Greece, it is estimated that approximately 1,000 to 1,500 Albanians migrants have moved to Austria from Greece lately. They are predominantly men, holders of Greek passports or long-term residence permits. Most of them are semi-skilled workers that have initially moved to Vienna alone in search of employment and better life perspectives, later followed by their spouses and children (Interview no. 9, Vienna). This might be due to the fact that the employment situation in Austria remained stable at about 75% during and after the economic crisis (MIPEX 2015b). At the same time, integration policy has made significant progress since 2007, rising 8 points on the MIPEX scale, with Austria ranked 20th out of the 38 MIPEX countries by the end of 2014. In an attempt to summarise the above, it could be

²⁶ Bey was the traditional ruler or the governor of a province in the Ottoman Empire.

²⁷ CEEPUS is a multilateral exchange programme within Central and Eastern Europe that was initiated by Austria in 1995 and encompasses universities from 16 Central and Eastern European countries, including Albania.

concluded that, unlike Greece, the patterns of Albanian migration in Austria and particularly in Vienna could be characterized as ‘elitist’ and/or ‘eclectic’ rather than large-scale and/or irregular.

3.2 *Integration*

Integration is not a linear or uniform process. It is an evolutionary, dialectical process, which develops in various spheres with different rhythms. It involves different actors, including the country of destination, the country of origin and migrants themselves. It assumes different forms and follows different strategies at different stages. The basic assumption behind the analysis of integration consists in its conceptualization as a process of social change that involves both migrants and the host society (KOHLBACHER 2017, p. 168). In line with this view, the basic idea is the convergence of social outcomes, where policy inputs on the basis of equal opportunities may produce equal outputs and consequently ensure the well-being of the entire population. It first denotes, however, that it is primarily the host country’s responsibility to ensure that migrants enjoy the same rights, allowing them to participate on equal terms in the economic, social, political and cultural life of the receiving country. Secondly, it implies that migrants respect the host society’s fundamental rules and values, and participate actively in the integration process (without relinquishing their ethnic identity), while developing feelings of belonging and identification (KOHLBACHER 2017, p. 170; HECKMANN 2006, p. 25; GEMI 2017, p. 13). In this context, integration is perceived as a process that covers three analytically distinct dimensions of becoming, or not becoming, an equal part of society. These are summarized as (a) the legal-political, (b) the socio-economic, and (c) the cultural-religious. The first refers to the basic question of whether immigrants are regarded as ‘legal’ members of the political community with corresponding rights and statuses. The second dimension pertains to rights related to institutionalized access to the socio-economic sphere such as the labour market, housing and education. The third refers to perceptions and practices that involve the rights of cultural, ethnic or religious groups to manifest themselves, as well as the mutual acceptance of difference and diversity (GARCÉS-MASCAREÑAS and PENNINX 2016, p. 14; PENNINX 2004, p. 6).

3.2.1 *Legal-Political Dimension*

With regard to the **legal dimension**, the residence permit defines the legal status of migrants and is one of the key institutional and structural factors that affect the outcome of the integration process. The more stable and long-standing the status of residence, the better and safer the prospects for the social integration of immigrants. For migrants, legal status is understood to entail the principles of equality, freedom and access to the same rights as those enjoyed by the host population. Some of the indicators measuring

the legal-political dimension could be residence permits and related rights, citizenship, political participation, and civil society participation.

In **Austria**, the majority of Albanians are either holders of a long-term residence permit (EU permit) or an Austrian passport by naturalization. The first category enjoys fully fledged social and economic rights, but not political rights. According to a key informant, about 15,000 Albanians are registered in the electoral list, which indicates that they have become Austrian citizens with the right to vote (Interview no. 3, Vienna). Another significant legal category is that of Albanian students who have graduated from Austrian universities. As one of the interviewees suggests:

“The number of Albanian students that originally came into the country for study reasons and then settled for good is believed to be about 2,500-3,000.” (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

As was mentioned earlier, Albania is ranked among the top eight countries with a large number of university students in Austria (BIEFL 2017, p.75). According to an interviewee, this is due to low university fees, the easy access and the high quality of tertiary education in Austria:

“The reason for choosing Austria had to do first with my own desire and need to leave Greece (Albanian of second generation) and secondly my cousin introduced me to the tertiary education system of Austria that is cheap, accessible and of high quality.” (Interview no. 12, Vienna).

In fact, the international mobility of students, graduates, as well as scientific and artistic staff is regarded as a very important part of the internationalization of the Austrian tertiary education system.

“I got the high school diplomas from the Austrian Information Technology School ‘Peter Mahringer’ based in Shkoder. After graduating in 2016, I enrolled at the Vienna Economic University. I do not pay any fees since my high school diploma was issued by an Austrian institution.” (Interview no. 13, Vienna).

This is further supported by another key informant who put emphasis on the highly skilled profile of Albanian migration in Austria:

“There are more than 2,000 Albanian students that are currently enrolled in Austrian universities and many other Albanian professors who teach at Austrian universities. There are also distinguished Albanian artists...” (Interview no. 3, Vienna).

In addition, the Austrian government has sought to facilitate the legal terms and conditions for TCN students²⁸ to work during studying and to remain in the country to work after graduation from an Austrian university (MUSIL and REYHANI 2012, p. 11). A student interviewee confirms the above:

²⁸ Legislation on entry and stay for TCN students in Austria is regulated according to the EU Students Directive.

"I have mostly worked as waitress. Sometimes regularly, sometimes irregularly and this because of my student status. Now, the law has changed. Students are allowed to work 20 hours instead of the 10 hours provided by the previous law." (Interview no. 12, Vienna).

Furthermore, the multilateral Central European Exchange Programme facilitates studying in Austria for University Studies (CEEPUS) initiated by Austria in 1995, with Albania being one of the main partners (MUSIL and REYHANI 2012, p. 67). Notwithstanding the aforementioned, the field work revealed getting a student visa as the main barrier to ensure legal status. As one of interviewees pointed out:

"...Every year I face problems with the visa's renewal without any concrete and justified reason. There have been cases when I had to wait from two to three months to get the visa while the previous one had already expired." (Interview no. 5, Vienna).

One student interviewee supports that the change in civil servants' behaviour has come as a result of the recent refugee crisis and the rise of a xenophobic attitude:

"In the beginning, things were going according to plan. Since 2015, however, the attitude of civil servants responsible for the renewal of stay permits has completely changed. One could wait for several months for a visa to be issued and what's more problematic is the fact that they ask for additional documents without providing any reasonable argument." (Interview no. 12, Vienna).

Another migrant category is that of seasonal Albanian workers coming to Vienna to work irregularly on a seasonal basis:

"There is a small number of Albanian citizens who enter Austria and stay only for 3 months – as much as biometric passports allows – to work in construction sites or to do babysitting. They are usually supported and facilitated by Albanian and Kosovar networks here in Vienna." (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

The people involved tend to make use of transnational community networks. Facilitated by geographic proximity, these networks tend to favour cross-border movement of irregular migrants in response to economic opportunities. Last, the fieldwork showed another category of Albanian investors (with former politicians included among them), which benefits from the stability and prosperity of the Austrian economy and its banking system. This is reinforced by the fact that the Austrian Government has created a network of bilateral investment treaties (BITs) with 62 countries, including Albania, for the promotion and protection of investment (BIFFL 2017, p.140).

In the meantime, in **Greece**, the greatest obstacle to the integration of migrants is the legal framework. As a key informant maintains:

"This is due to the fact that legalization programmes have failed to create a stable and permanent mechanism for the legalization of migrants and their integration into Greek society." (Interview no. 11, Athens).

Concerning regular migration, Greece's economic crisis has led to an increase in unemployment and the displacement of a large number of Albanians, especially those working in the construction sector (Interview no. 3, Athens). The above is broadly confirmed by data provided by the Ministry of the Interior, which suggested that between 130,000 and 140,000 Albanian migrant workers lost their residence permits because they were unable to secure the required number of social insurance stamps to renew their documents (GEMI 2013, p. 4). The Migration and Integration Code (L4251/2014, Article 7) has however facilitated the gradual unification of all long-term residence permits under the EU long-term resident status (L. 4251/14, Article 138). Thus, 10-year permits are no longer renewed automatically as they have been in the past, but are converted to the EU long-term resident status when the conditions are met. In August 2018, the ratio of long-term permits to total residence permits has increased significantly, with long-term permits accounting for 40.45% of all valid permits compared to 26% in 2013, 33% in 2014, 36% in 2015, 37% in 2016 and 35.8% in 2017 (GEMI and TRIANDAFYLIDOU 2018). Notwithstanding the improvements made, many Albanians still face serious problems with the renewal of residence permits. A key informant maintains that:

"The difficult task of ensuring the legal status remains a major obstacle to integration along with lack of information, gaps in legislation, and inefficiency of administrative mechanisms." (Interview no. 10, Athens).

It is widely recognized that the model of **citizenship** is a key variable in assessing integration and migration policies. In fact, it is directly linked to the tradition and history of each nation state in the course of the process of the establishment of state identity. Thus, any form of integration is determined by the way citizenship is perceived. Whether defined formally or in real terms, citizenship in liberal democratic societies means ensuring the individual's rights to fully fledged participation in society. This refers both to the laws and to the institutions of a political system, which determine social interaction and the actors that take part in it (GEMI 2017, p. 39).

Austria has an ethnicity-based model of citizenship, which is known as *ius sanguinis*. It means that individuals of Austrian origin (i.e. having Austrian parents) are primarily granted citizenship. Such a model has been found to produce restrictive naturalization policies (BAUBÖCK 2006). As one of the interviewees put it:

"In Austria, only Austrian citizens have the right to vote and stand as candidate in elections. Austria has one of the most restrictive laws concerning citizenship in Europe. Thus the political participation and representation of migrants only extend to those who have been naturalized." (Interview no. 3, Vienna).

According to MIPEX (2015b), despite the fact that integration policy has made significant progress since 2007 (rising 8 points on the MIPEX scale), the most problematic policy areas in Austria remain access to nationality and political participation. Austria is among the countries with high barriers to the acquisition of citizenship (BAUBÖCK 2006). This is also confirmed by the available data on naturalization. In 2016 alone, 8,500

foreigners were granted Austrian citizenship, which amounts 0.7% naturalisations as a percentage of the foreign population. Interestingly, the naturalisation rate has remained stable for seven consecutive years (2009-2016) (BIFFL 2017, p. 93). An interviewee, who addresses it as follows, also confirms this:

"...only 7 in 1,000 migrants obtain citizenship per year." (Interview no. 6, Vienna).

Meanwhile, in Vienna, 27% of residents of voting age have no right to vote, while 21% of TCNs are excluded from naturalization because of income limits (STADTWIEN 2017, p. 8). A foreign citizen should legally stay in Austria for ten consecutive years in order to be eligible for citizenship. Furthermore, such a person should have sufficient means of subsistence (meet the income threshold without receiving social assistance), hold a B1 (or B2) certificate of proficiency in the German language, produce the renunciation of his or her former nationality, and pass a written test about the democratic system and history of Austria and Vienna. This is also mentioned by one of the interviewees, who described the test as follows:

"The written multiple choices test is articulated around three chapters: the history of Austria, the history of Vienna and the democratic values." (Interview no. 4, Vienna).

In principle, the Austrian Nationality Act does not allow dual citizenship. However, there are exceptions, including persons who had obtained dual citizenship by birth or those who are deemed important for Austrian interests due to exceptional achievements. The following excerpt illustrates a similar case:

"My daughter holds dual citizenship: Austrian (from me) and Macedonian (from her mother)... since her mother is not an Austrian citizen." (Interview no. 4, Vienna).

Similarly, in **Greece**, the citizenship has been based predominantly on the *ius sanguinis* principle. Importantly also, citizenship is defined in ethnic-genealogical and cultural terms with little reference to civic elements and the possibility to 'become' rather than 'be born' Greek (TRIANDAFYLLOU et al. 2015). As an interviewee put it:

"For the TCNs, until March 2010, the process of applying for citizenship was very long, costly, and with a very uncertain outcome or no outcome at all, even for migrants who had lived in Greece for more than 20 years and meet all the requirements." (Interview no. 3, Athens).

It is important to highlight that the *ius sanguinis* logic was applied differently for different groups of co-ethnics (*omogeneis* in Greek). In contrast to Pontiac Greeks (coming from the former Soviet Republics), who benefitted from citizenship attainment, co-ethnics from Albania, the so-called *Voreioipirotes*, were faced with a tacit ban on citizenship acquisition until 2007 (BALTSIOTIS 2014, p. 7). The policy changed in November 2006 when the then Greek government (New Democracy) decided to promote

the procedures for granting the Greek citizenship to co-ethnics from Southern Albania. Naturalisations of Greek Albanian co-ethnics rose exponentially to over 10,000 people per year and to approximately 50,000 people in the period 2007-2010 (TRIANDAFYLIDOU et al. 2015). Concerning the second generation, the situation appeared to be even more problematic:

“(There is) a second generation of the young, who was born, raised and has attended all the levels of the Greek educational system, from kindergarten to the University of Athens, and when it comes to working rights, he/she has no access to employment at public institutions.” (Interview no. 5, Athens).

In an effort to normalize the situation, in 2015, the newly-elected government (of SYRIZA) reformed the citizenship law, making naturalization possible with a simple declaration/application for children born in Greece and for youths who have completed the greater part of their education in Greece.²⁹ However, an interviewer maintains that the above law, while improving the position of the second generation, failed to address the problem of the first generation:

“... in fact, notwithstanding the positive effects on the second generation, the new citizenship law (2015) failed to facilitate the naturalization of the first generation migrants, who came to Greece in the 1990s and have been living in Greece since then.” (Interview no. 14, Athens).

For 2017, a significant increase in the number of citizenship acquisitions mainly through birth or study can be observed, including an increase in acquisitions of citizenship by non-co-ethnics (L. 4332/2015). Moreover, an increase is also noted in the number of naturalisations, with 56,274 Albanian nationals – or 85% of the total number of naturalized immigrants – having obtained Greek citizenship in the 2010-2014 period. In addition, the naturalisation provisions that came into effect in 2015 have led to increasing numbers of citizenship acquisitions mostly by children born in Greece, or children who came to the country at a young age and have attended Greek schools. These account for 33,000 naturalisations in 2017, of which about two-thirds were for children of the second or 1.5 generation. With regard to their previous nationality, the vast majority, namely 28,536 persons, were Albanians (GEMI and TRIANDAFYLIDOU 2018, p. 6).

Theoretically, **political integration** and participation could be described as a continuum with socio-political exclusion at the one end, and the full exercise of political rights (citizenship) at the other. This in turn has resulted in the development of different forms of political action, which include, among others, the parliamentary, electoral and consultative bodies, pressure groups and ethnic/immigrant organizations. Among the main determinants that affect the organizational behaviour and the presence of immigrants in the public life of the country of settlement are: (a) Migration policy (such

²⁹ Primary education: 9 years required; secondary: six years required and university, for which a secondary education certificate is also required.

as access to citizenship, voting rights and integration policies). (b) The influence of the country of origin. (c) Collective identities (such as the sense of belonging to a particular ethnic, religious and/or racial group) (KOOPMANS et al. 2005). With regard to political participation at the local level, 27% of **Viennese** residents above 16 (who are formally eligible) are currently excluded from voting due to the legal restrictions on the voting rights of TCNs (STADTWIEN 2017). With regard to formal political participation, the low level, if any, of Albanians in Viennese political life is illustrated in a very characteristic way in the following excerpt:

“Among 100 MPs in the Vienna Parliament, only two are of migrant background (Turks) ... 15,000 Albanians took part in previous elections, but no one voted for candidates coming from their community. In proportion to the size of the community, Albanians in Vienna may have elected at least two representatives in the Parliament of Vienna.” (Interview no. 3, Vienna).

According to the same interviewee, it is the case when the manipulative role of the country of origin, combined with weak bonds of collective ethnic identity, work as a deterrent force to active participation and representation of Albanians in public life:

“In contrast to Kosovars, Albanians are not organized, reflecting, in a way, the fragmentation of Albanian society back in Albania.” (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

In Vienna, there is a wide spectrum of migrant associations and organisations, whose main activities are cultural, political, religious, or sport-related in nature. The same also holds true for Albanian migrants:

“The Albanian community in Vienna is relatively well-organized. There are twenty Albanian associations in total, but not all of them are active. Most of them are focused on cultural and sport activities.” (Interview no. 3, Vienna).

The main form of Albanian migrants’ organisations is that based on a common ethnic background. The following excerpt clearly illustrates this:

“There are more than 100 Albanian associations from Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia in Austria, but only 1/3 of them are active. For us (the Albanian state), the diaspora are all ethnic Albanians.” (Interview no. 1, Vienna).

In practice, however, the City of Vienna makes little distinction between migrants’ ethnic, national and religious organisations. To this end, it provides funds to migrant organizations and other NGOs in order to offer services related to legal issues, community networking and free language courses (Interview no. 3, Vienna).

In **Greece**, the prevailing conditions of insecurity and the lack of long-term prospects are major obstacles for participation in public life (Interview no. 14, Athens). In fact, the participation of Albanian migrants in civil society institutions (non-governmental organizations, cultural associations) is at a low level and mainly revolves around issues related to the renewal of residence permits, rather than around issues related to the social and political requirements for participation and presentation in Greek society (Interview no. 15, Athens). An interviewee addresses it as follows:

“The Greek opportunity structure provides incentives neither for formal, nor for informal political participation.” (Interview no. 10, Athens).

Since 2010, the highest representation platform in local government has been the Migrant Integration Councils (MICs) (Interview no. 4, Athens). They were established in the course of a major administrative and local government reform, known by the name of ‘Kallikratis’ in 2010³⁰. These councils function as consultative bodies to the municipal authorities. However, in practice things are different:

“The MIC has no legal status; it is just an advisory body. The migrant communities participating in MIC and their initiatives are under the aegis of the chair of MIC, who is appointed by the Mayor. For example, a resolution may be discussed in the municipal council only if it is approved by the chair.” (Interview no. 4, Athens).

The main obstacle in promoting the role of the MICs has been the lack of political will and political interests in empowering them. However, MICs were introduced around the same time as the local voting rights with Law 3838/2010. The suspension of local migrant rights in the aftermath of the above-mentioned Council of State decision has undermined those original goals and expectations. As TCNs do not have local voting power, they cannot rally the support of, and exercise pressure upon local and national authorities to respond to their problems and demands (Interview no. 5, Athens). The following excerpt describes the situation:

“Unfortunately, during the first period of operation, the first registered members of the MIC of Athens were political parties or NGOs affiliated to political parties. This therefore acts corrosively because they in reality promote their specific agenda.” (Interview no. 4, Athens).

3.2.2 Socio-Economic Dimension

The *socio-economic* dimension addresses the social and economic position of the migrant population, irrespective of their citizenship. This approach denotes a process aiming at ensuring the same living and working conditions as well as equal rights among native and immigrant populations. Within this dimension, the position of immigrants can be analysed by looking at their access to and participation in domains of education, the labour market, and housing.

Language and education: the discussion on migration and integration includes an important dimension: the role of proficiency in the language of the host country. The key factor of socio-economic integration in relation to linguistic diversity is not, however, the knowledge of the language or languages *per se*, but communication. Meanwhile, many countries are currently promoting ‘re-nationalisation’ with respect to language

³⁰ Article 78 of Law 3852/2010 (07.06.2010) on the ‘New Architecture of the structure of Local Authorities and Decentralized Administration’.

and culture (WODAK 2017, p. 122), an approach that is closely tied to the policy of recognition (BAUBÖCK 2011). In this sense, both education and the acquisition of language skills (as a prerequisite for belonging) are becoming increasingly important at every stage of immigrants' life cycle.

In **Austria**, proficiency in the German language is a necessary condition for migrants' integration and their participation in social and economic life:

"An integration priority in Vienna is language learning. It is mandatory, and the essential part of the integration agreement at national level. Migrants usually get funds for learning, contrary to EU citizens who don't get funded and don't sign any integration agreement." (Interview no. 10, Vienna).

Furthermore, potential migrants have to acquire a *Rot-Weiss-Rot* Card before entry to Austria, although this does not apply to highly skilled migrants. Some key arguments behind the compulsory nature of post- and pre-arrival integration tests (including language) refer to its 'emancipatory' benefit in terms of gender equality. It is also seen as a necessary instrument to overcome a presumed lack of willingness to integrate (PERCHINIG 2012, p. 89). It is not coincidental that in 2017, the Integration Act (*Integrationsgesetz* IntG) focussed on the right to language and orientation courses and the duty to cooperate, along with related sanctions (INTEGRATION ACT 2017, p. 4).

Since 2011, the City of Vienna and the Ministry of Integration have been offering German courses for migrants. Moreover, the Ministry of Integration delivers obligatory 'value courses' (one day for 8 hours), which every refugee whose application for asylum has been accepted has to attend (WODAK 2017, p. 126). A key informant evaluates the quality of German language courses as follows:

"Austria has good programmes for teaching German to foreigners and high school international students." (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

In **Greece**, developments on migration have led to the de facto creation of multi-cultural or multilingual environments. Nevertheless, various studies examining the level of Greek language acquisition showed that migrants have low linguistic proficiency, while the percentage of immigrants who have attended Greek language courses also appeared to be very low (BALDWIN-EDWARDS 2005; MAROUKIS 2010; GEMI 2017). The following excerpt illustrates the scope of the problem:

"The absolute lack of language competences deprive them from attending vocational training programmes or any other professional course towards making possible their integration into the Greek labour market." (Interview no. 1, Athens).

Obviously, while most migrants do not learn Greek through organized language programmes, there is also little of an organized institutional framework at both national and local level to ensure this. Meanwhile, the informal pattern of Greek language learning is evidently seen as a factor that leads to the inability of the immigrant population to develop adequate language skills (mostly writing and reading), and to the failure of

upward mobility. Interestingly, however, Albanians have the highest score of Greek language learning compared with other groups of migrants (GEMI 2017).

Talking about the local level, an interviewee describes the situation in the municipality of Athens as follows:

“The available courses of Greek language are very limited and the participation of migrants is even less limited. Integration, in fact, means the establishment of intercultural dialogue in fields such as health, education, and the cultural. There is a lack of specialized staff in our services. Many migrants do not pay visits to municipality clinics, for instance, because either they do not speak Greek, or, in case of Muslim women, there are cultural differences regarding the health services. In sum, migrants do not have incentives and they are not motivated to get in touch with our municipality structures and services.” (Interview no. 3, Athens).

Paradoxically, whilst the language proficiency certificate is considered a state responsibility, the resources and means for acquiring it are limited. Regarding access to language courses, the attendance requirements are particularly demanding. Class attendance depends on the attendee's residence permit and employment status. It is not surprising therefore that most migrants learn the (spoken) Greek language through work and television (GEMI 2017, p. 145). At national level, Greece perceives both the national language and culture as gatekeepers to restrict the integration of the 'other'. Hence, the Greek state formulates its migration policy on the basis not only of language proficiency, but also of the national culture and religion (WODAK and BOUKALA 2015, p. 268). More precisely, the law 4115/2013³¹ (article 31) maintains, *“Sufficient knowledge of the Greek language, history and culture is confirmed by a certificate in Greek language knowledge at B1 Level or Greek language and history testing”*.

In terms of access to education, at the kindergarten run by the Municipality of Athens, 18% of children come from migrant families of various nationalities (Interview no. 8, Athens). However, there are different conditions depending on neighbourhood synthesis, as is illustrated by the following excerpt:

“... at Favierou street 90% of children enrolled at the kindergarten are of foreign parents. Another characteristic example is the 123th elementary school of Gravia, which is known to be very open to diversity, where currently 90% of children are of migrant origin. The prevailing nationality is the Albanian, even though their number has significantly reduced compared to previous years.” (Interview no. 8, Athens).

For a child to be accepted in a kindergarten, a prerequisite is one of his/her parents to have legal residence in Greece. This changes when it comes to the elementary schools, to which all children, regardless of parents' legal status, have equal access.

³¹ L. 4115/2013: Organization and operation of the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation and the National Agency for Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Orientation.

Employment is perhaps the most important aspect of integration, since it determines immigrants' living conditions and the fulfilment of their migration goal. Indeed, employment has always been one of the main mechanisms of integration for both the native and migrant population, being at the same time one of the biggest structural challenges in terms of integration and equality. In fact, the position of migrants in the labour market depends upon several structural and non-structural factors, including migration policy, labour market structure, the demographic characteristics of immigrants, residence status, and chosen migration strategies.

In **Austria**, a labour market governance system facilitates the employment of migrants. This system is based on the social partnership principle, along with a complex system of regional institutions and integration policies at the local level. However, according to statistics, in 2016, only 56% of TCNs were in employment, compared to the 78% employment rate of migrants from EU/EFTA countries. The majority of TCNs with intermediate and higher qualifications from third countries were employed as unskilled or semi-skilled workers. This trend was particularly evident among women (STADTWIEN 2017, p. 10). One of the interviewees, who states the following, confirms this:

"The unemployment level of migrants is higher compared to that of natives. The main reason behind this is firstly the discrimination on the labour market, and secondly the undeclared employment of women." (Interview no. 3, Vienna).

At the same time, foreign diplomas – especially those from third countries – seem to count less than those issued by Austrian educational institutions do. As one of interviewee put it:

"Despite my efforts to find work in my profession (architect), it has been proven an impossible mission so far. It happened only once that I received an interview invitation, and this was after a personal interaction with a person that I had met by chance." (Interview no. 12, Vienna).

Conversely, another interviewee supports a different view about the labour market integration of Albanian migrants in Austria:

"The majority of Albanians in Austria work in jobs and sectors that are according to their educational and qualification status. Thus, their professional capital is properly evaluated. In Austria, there is a scrupulous system of the professional identification of an individual. If you are diligent in your work, the doors are and remain open." (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

At the local level, the role of the City of Vienna has been considered successful in obtaining positive results by means of a pro-active employment policy involving the social partners.

"Since the 1990s, the integration fund of the Government of Vienna has contributed to networking and job placements in specific professions, such as electricians and plumbers." (Interview no. 3, Vienna).

In the case of **Greece**, it has been observed that during the economic growth period of the 1990s, a number of factors played an important role in the attraction of migratory flows mainly from Albania. These include the improvement of living standards, the openness and seasonality of certain sectors of the Greek economy, and the relatively easy geographical access in conjunction with the so-called ‘developed model’ of informal economy. The dynamic of these developments consolidated a new type of labour division, where immigrants and native population were employed in ‘parallel labour markets’ in different sectors and professions. Immigrants mostly occupy unskilled (and seasonal) jobs, often below their educational qualifications in sectors characterized by the production of intensive labour, such as the construction sector and agriculture, and/or by informal activities such as domestic services (IOSIFIDES et al. 2007). According to an interviewee:

“...a big issue of the Greek labour market is the complexity and opacity of the insurance system. It is so complicated, difficult and opaque, that the migrant was led to believe that (he) was to be directed towards uninsured work.” (Interview no. 4, Athens).

From a gender perspective, a large part of Albanian women in Greece provide undeclared care services and their status is regulated for family reunification purposes. It is not a coincidence that 63% of TCN holders of residence permits for ‘family reunification’ in 2018 were women (129,206 out of 204,841). An interviewee supports that:

“Concentration in the home and care sector prevents migrant women from accessing Greek language learning programmes as well as active employment policies (training, career guidance and labour market integration, unemployment benefits, and so on). Gender inequalities and discrimination in the labour market are even more acute for migrant women who are single or single mothers.” (Interview no. 10, Athens).

The educational qualifications of immigrants are not recognized as equivalent to the corresponding degrees of native workers. During the past twenty-five years, both immigrants (first generation) and their children (second generation) have been excluded from access to several professions, despite the fact that they hold the necessary educational and professional qualifications (Interview no. 15, Athens). The onset of the economic crisis in Greece in 2010 deeply affected the economic and social conditions of Albanian migrants.

“...migrants still remain trapped in the vicious circle of ensuring the insurance stamps, unstable work and temporary residence permits. Some lost their residence permit, others found a half solution due to the introduction of the Code of Migration and Integration (in 2014), but in fact not all of the population was covered, and this relationship of dependency of legality from the economy and the labour market for migrants plays a huge role.” (Interview no. 12, Athens).

However, according to EL.STAT (2018), the share of foreign citizens in the national labour force was 69.5% in the 2nd quarter of 2018, showing a slight increase compared to 2017 (66.7%). Migrants' participation in the labour market exceeds that of Greek citizens by more than 18.2%. Yet, in 2017, the unemployment rate of Greek citizens was 8% and 6% lower than that of foreigners, whose unemployment rates stood at 29% and 25% in 2017 and 2018, respectively. At the same time, the flow data on Albanian seasonal workers show an upward trend in 2018, compared to 2017.

Housing is considered an integral part of immigrants' integration in urban areas (BOSSWICK et al. 2007, p. 1). Indeed, a concrete spatial location is not just a geographical reference of individuals' everyday lives, but also a means of accessing different activities and life chances. Moreover, a particular location also reflects the type of housing and the special socio-economic status of the people who live there.

In **Vienna**, the housing patterns are shaped largely by the residential structure and opportunities available on the local housing market. On the residential social or class 'map' of the city it can be seen that people from traditional guest-worker states (Turkey and former Yugoslavia) are concentrated in residential areas located in the western working class districts, while other (elite) foreign citizens can be found in northwest Vienna (KOHLEBACHER et al. 2012, p. 15). One interviewee maintains that that segregation is not a problem for Vienna:

"Today, migrants live everywhere in city centre. In Vienna segregation grows less and less important." (Interview no. 10, Vienna).

However, another interviewee expressed concerns about emerging ghettoization trends:

"The new far right government is planning to build houses for refugees in certain neighbourhoods located on the outskirts of the city. This could be very dangerous because of the potential of creating ghetto neighbourhoods." (Interview no. 2, Vienna).

The City of Vienna has become known for implementing specific policies focused on social housing. As two interviewees pointed out:

"About 1/3 of the population lives in social housing that is owned by the city of Vienna. Indeed, the City of Vienna is the biggest (property) owner among public institutions in the entire Europe." (Interviews no. 3 and 10, Vienna).

This has not always been the case. As the same interviewees support:

"Until 2004, migrants were not allowed to enter social housing programmes. Back then only Austrian citizens had the right to occupy public housing, while migrants were left in the hands of the private market." (Interview no. 3 and 10, Vienna).

Since then, access to subsidised housing for migrants has required the fulfilment of certain criteria, such as holding a long-term residence permit, and German language proficiency at level B1.

In **Athens**, there is an observed pattern of migrant concentration in apartment blocks in the city's central districts. This is primarily due to the urban model of development that was marked by the access of migrants to a large, affordable housing stock. More specifically, Athens is a mosaic of contradictions regarding design practice, the form of the urban structure, and social stratification. The unique and particularly complex social geography of the city's urban space in combination with present-day economic circumstances is the context within which differentiations in the choice of housing for migrants must be sought. The following excerpt illustrates the situation:

"In Athens, there is no housing policy for migrants. Currently, the main problem with migrants and newly arrived refugees is housing. We have submitted project proposals to UNHCR to rent apartments that will accommodate them." (Interview no. 13, Athens).

At the same time, this heterogeneous population tends to settle in a disorderly fashion, with little planning, transforming Athens into a 'chaotic city'. All of these factors have led to particular and very differentiated spatial models of organization in the city. Spontaneous urbanism³² (LEONTIDOU 1990), as well as the structure of the process of production in combination with informal forms of employment, contributed to the creation of multi-functional but socially homogeneous areas and neighbourhoods in the city centre. Low prices, in combination with the central position of these areas, tend to attract migrants and members of low socio-economic strata in general, who either rent or seek to acquire their first home in these areas. In the wake of the refugee crisis, the Municipality of Athens has taken ad hoc initiatives in order to cope with accommodation (rather than housing) needs of newcomers:

"We try not to leave people sleeping in the squares of Athens. To cope with that, we constructed the refugee camp in Eleona. It would be good if those people, instead of staying in Viktoria Square, found suitable places at Eleona camp ... at least there the refugees' health issues have been covered by NGOs. The Municipality has neither the capacity nor the staff to cover their needs." (Interview no. 13, Athens).

3.2.3 Cultural-Religious Dimension

One of the crucial questions pertaining the *cultural-religious* dimension concerns the efficient management of increasing cultural and religious diversity in modern societies. From an individual perspective, culture and religion are perceived as a private matter, comprising a set of perceptions and practices of both migrants and the host society. The reciprocal perceptions of and reactions to difference and diversity seem to be more important, however (GARCÉS-MASCAREÑAS and PENNINX 2016, p. 115). Here

³² Spontaneous urbanism refers to the process of unplanned urbanization whereby informal housing became the rule, regardless of the available infrastructure in the greater area of Athens and Piraeus.

again we would distinguish between two scenarios. In the first scenario, diversity must be ignored and migrants must be assimilated into the cultural and religious realm of the host society. The second scenario is based on the hypothesis that in a pluralistic social system, ethnic and cultural diversity is accepted and respected in public life. Certainly, there are various intermediate positions between the two scenarios. These could be intertwined with values and beliefs, with popular culture and everyday practices such as inter-ethnic social contacts, and with religious practices.

Social interaction: In the new social environment of the host country, immigrants usually develop new links and contacts that extend beyond the in-group and/or inter-group contacts, focusing mainly on interaction with members of local communities.

The City of **Vienna** has put forward initiatives to cater to specific ethnic groups, which – according to scholars – do not contribute to create a strong inter-ethnic mix. As emphasized by the study of DAHLVIK et al. (2017), 50% of the initiatives in Viennese neighbourhoods result in partial interethnic encounters, while 50% do not result in interethnic encounters at all (p. 16). Albanians in Vienna appeared to maintain stronger social bonds with their community rather than to develop social bridges to locals:

“Albanians usually live in a virtual kinship community that meets once or twice a month.” (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

Students display a somewhat different picture concerning their social contacts, which depends on their social environment, but again the trend is slightly in favour of social bonds:

“Social contacts are more often with co-fellows from Albania with whom I have been to school in Shkodra. But I also keep contacts with Austrians and other students coming mostly from countries of former Yugoslavia.” (Interview no. 13, Vienna).

On the other hand, the cultural differences seem to create a barrier in the way in which both Albanians and Austrians perceive social contacts:

“There are differences in social contacts with Austrians. For example, even if we worked together on the same projects, once we were out of the school environment, they left in different directions without talking to you anymore, as if we did not know each other.” (Interview no. 13, Vienna).

In **Athens**, social relations with locals appear weak, whereas social capital (family/relatives and ethnic networks) of Albanians seems to play an important role (IOSIFIDES et al. 2007). This is mainly attributed to the dominant, negative public image of Albanians in Greek society.

“My parents took me to Athens when I was two years old. My experience there was marked by a racist flavour of natives. I recall specific moments during my elementary school where I tried to hide my Albanian origin and identity because of

the public outcry against Albanians and Albanian children waving the Greek flag during national ceremonial events.” (Interview no. 12, Vienna).

Religion: In stark contrast to Greece, **Austria** has adopted an Islam Law that came into effect in March 2015. The law, which was drafted in close cooperation with Muslim associations, ensures Muslims the right to practice their religion and specifies the rights and duties of the various Muslim denominations (Biffel 2017, p. 166). With reference to Albanians, two interviewees gave the following picture:

“There is a religious tolerance in Austria. There are 30 mosques in the entire Austria, 8 of which are Albanians’ and there is also an Albanian Catholic mission.” (Interview no. 1 and 3, Vienna).

As the fieldwork showed, the religious communities in Vienna are well organized. Furthermore, they are entitled to propose and approve the appointment of religious teachers in schools. Ultimately, the City/Province of Vienna is responsible for recruiting teachers and for ensuring the principle of secularism. An interviewee also highlights this:

“Two aspects are significant: the native language classes and religious education in schools. In the case of religious classes, the teachers are recruited after the approval of the religious community.” (Interview no. 4, Vienna).

At an organizational level, the Muslim community in Vienna has a rotating presidency with the participation of all ethnicities, although Turks outnumber the other ethnic communities (Interview no. 4, Vienna). Given the specific religious beliefs of Albanians, it is no coincidence that they appear to be rather inactive, as is illustrated in the following excerpt:

“Albanians are not at all active in religious life in Vienna. Those who are active are the Albanians coming from Macedonia.” (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

It becomes even more problematic when the Albanian state is equated with the Muslim religion, as has been pointed out by an interviewee:

“The fact that the majority of mosques bear the inscription ‘Albanian Cultural Centre’ is really worrisome. This identifies the Albanian state with a religion, which is not the case.” (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

In **Greece**, on the other hand, the constitution recognizes Greek Orthodoxy as the ‘prevailing religion’. Notwithstanding the fact that the Muslim religious communities (mostly identified with the minority of Thrace) has a long-held status as official religious legal entities, Athens remains the only European capital without an Islamic mosque.

Discrimination and xenophobia: discrimination is a result of the host society’s negative attitude towards migrants. It can also be the result of institutional structures and processes, the practices of which systematically counter the interests of migrant groups. On the subject of institutional discrimination in the case of **Vienna**, an interviewee maintains that:

"In Vienna there is no structural discrimination." (Interview no. 3, Vienna).

Another interviewee whose experience in dealing with the municipality of Vienna is rather gloomy, however, opposes the above opinion:

"The main problem is the documentation and the bureaucracy of the renewal of residence permits or visas. Perhaps for subjective reasons, my residence permit has been delayed. The reason was that, although the contract of the house is in my name and in that of my fellow student, they denied accepting it, because the previous resident had not declared (his) change of residence. The clarification of this caused a delay in the renewal of the visa and after the visa was finally issued, I was told that I have overstayed the 3 months of free stay in Austria and I had to go to Albania to get a visa and to go back again in order to claim the residence permit. When I went to Albania, I was fined 650 euro for violating the residence permit in the Schengen area." (Interview no. 13, Vienna).

Similarly, the following excerpts illustrate that the institutional discrimination is 'legalized' today because of a phobic attitude towards diversity, where diversity and the 'others' have been ideologically stigmatized:

"What happened in 2015 with the refugee crisis has adversely affected the situation. Now, the system in general has become very scrupulous. Some days ago, there was an Albanian student whose stay permit was rejected because he had € 6,950 in his bank account instead of € 7,000 (as it is required). On another occasion, while the father had deposited € 20,000 in his son's account, the stay permit was again rejected based on the assumption that the amount and the source of the money in the student's account was large and unjustified." (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

Another interviewee approaches the subject from a different angle and brings his own version of the reality:

"The reason behind this behaviour is the rise to power of far-right forces and their policies towards migrants. The attitude of public officials concerned is not that of ordinary people, they have a different code of communication. They get very arrogant and rigorous when it comes to laws, but the obligation to keep them is placed on migrants. For example, when they make a mistake that consists in not providing you with a document, they blame you for not having asked for it." (Interview no. 13, Vienna).

An interviewee in Athens articulates the same concerns:

"Obviously the other big problem is that, in recent years, we have unfortunately seen an increase in the phenomenon of racist violence, especially in Athens. This was expressed both at the central political level and in the Municipality, with the dramatic rise of far-right forces on the political stage." (Interview no. 12, Athens).

In **Athens**, Albanian migrants face a number of obstacles in the process of integration, which are mainly due to the institutional constraints that feed discriminatory practices:

"...there is an institutional discrimination which comes as result of the refusal of access to Greek citizenship and to the exercise of political participation rights." (Interview no. 5, Athens).

Contrary to the above opinion, what seems to prevail at municipality level is the principle of equal access and rights for all people regardless of ethnic origin:

"As far as the Municipality's philosophy is concerned, it has been explicitly stated that all those living in Athens have equal rights and opportunities and there is no discrimination in terms of benefits...there is no discrimination. The general perception actually prevailing is that the Municipality has to provide for residents and citizens accordingly to their needs." (Interview no. 8, Athens).

Another interviewee, meanwhile, accepts that racist incidents have been recorded, involving municipal police:

"There have been, however, various racist incidents in the Municipal Police, who are responsible for the licensing of stores in the health branch. They did not give permission to migrant businesses, even though they forced them to make large investments." (Interview no. 3, Athens).

In Austria, in daily life, discrimination and racism pose serious obstacles to immigrants' access to important resources of survival such as in the area of employment.

"There is a hidden discrimination mainly in certain sectors of employment. For example, from 7,000 police, only 300-400 are of migrant background. Even though they formally fulfil the conditions, they usually 'fail' in psychological tests that are subjective." (Interview no. 3, Vienna).

Thus, for example, institutional discrimination can occur when the right to employment in the public sector only applies to the native population:

"No migrant is employed in the municipal or social services of the municipality of Athens. I think it would be very important to give the proper message to the citizens. It is a way of accepting those people being an equal part of the city life." (Interview no. 4, Athens).

The dimension of social interaction in relation to discrimination and racism is determined by the duration of contact between immigrants and the native population. Some arguments underline that the prolonged time span of the inter-group contacts reduces prejudice, while others, on the contrary, argue that biases may increase with time. The following interviewee confirms the former opinion:

"Interestingly, in places where there are no migrants and as such their presence is not visible to locals, the latter are far more conservative than those who have come into contact with migrants." (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

However, the possibility does exist that discrimination and racism may increase (rather than decrease) when the number of migrants increases and their presence becomes more visible (in public places in particular), while their presence is seen as a threat to ethnic homogeneity:

"Because Austria is a small state, there is an increasing phobia towards immigrants or other ethnicities coming from large states. In a way Austrians see their homogeneity in peril – they are very sensitive to religious affiliation." (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

Comparing Austria and Greece, an interviewee makes the following distinction:

"In Vienna, the people are formally polite but in my daily experience their attitude is discriminatory and exclusionary, something that doesn't happen in Greece. There, the ordinary people are not very polite. They would openly express any feeling and stereotype about foreigners without following any code of conduct. But when it comes to daily life, they support you and provide help without hesitance." (Interview no. 12, Vienna).

It thus becomes clear that both Austria and Greece are multicultural societies and that the imaginary homogeneity remains a myth. Officially, both Austria and Greece refer to pluralism and the positive integration of migrants, although the country's lawmakers represent the Austrian and the Greek cultural and identity as homogeneous. Austrian and Greek citizenship remains based on *ius sanguinis*. In contrast to Greece, where dual citizenship is accepted, migrants in Austria have to renounce their previous nationality, although certain exceptions to this rule are often made. In fact, in both countries, naturalization is considered a 'reward' (JURADO 2008, p. 5) for a migrant's assimilation, rather than as an institutional tool for enhancing integration (BAUBÖCK 2006; KYMLICKA 2003). To this end, both states subscribe to the above view and demand that migrants pass naturalisation tests that include high levels of proficiency in the host country language as well as knowledge of the history and culture of the state. Applicants for citizenship should furthermore subscribe to the public values in the case of both states.

With regard to Albanian migrants in Vienna, it was observed that they are hardly organized around the community. They are assimilated, which is also reflected by the fact that the second generation does not speak the Albanian language. This can also be justified by the fact that most of them have obtained Austrian citizenship, which means that they automatically have lost Albanian citizenship. Another element that confirms the assimilation pattern of Albanians is the fact that, despite the opportunity provided to attend Albanian language courses at school, Albanians are generally not willing to participate. As attested by interviewees, the aim much rather is to come as close as possible to the Austrian model of living, which means to avoid any customs or actions

that might make Albanians look different from Austrians. Again, it is maintained that Albanians tend to self-assimilate, which in turn is viewed as an approach of conformity with the existing system of the country of destination, which shows a trend of 'positive integration'. The same pattern emerges when talking about the second generation in Greece. They rarely speak any Albanian and even in a situation of crisis, instead of going back to Albania or staying in Greece, they opt for moving to other Western countries.

At the local level, integration policies mainly focus on two realms: German language courses and public housing for all. However, the first and ultimate requirement is learning the German language. Although the Municipality of Vienna's room for manoeuvre is very limited, there is a broad agreement between municipal authorities and national policies that labour market integration and professional training are important goals. In Athens, on the other hand, there is no clear plan or tailor-made local policy for integrating migrants and there are no mechanisms towards reaching this goal. Migrants have achieved a certain degree of integration on own initiative, without any contribution by local government. This could be called one-way rather than two-way integration.

3.3 *Transnationalism*

For migrants, being transnational means embarking on multiple relationships and establishing 'double engagement' in more than one place, while being simultaneously 'here' and 'there' (GRILLO and MAZZUCATO 2008). To study transnationalism, scholars have attempted to classify transnational activities by distinguishing between economic, political, and socio-cultural dimensions (PORTES 2001, p. 187). Economic activities include remittances and investments in the home country, which, in turn, could pave the way for an emerging new component, namely the return to the country of origin (KING and COLLYER 2016, p. 179). Political activities encompass, among other things, ideas about democracy, transparency and participation in home countries' national elections in a form of transnational political capital (MÜGGE 2016, p. 111). On the other hand, transnational socio-cultural activities could be interpreted in the light of socio-cultural capital that entails ideas, behaviours, identities, morality, and cultural codes that are eventually dependent on the level of migrant integration in countries of settlement (LEVITT 1998, p. 926). Not all migrants are however necessarily involved in transnational activities. Some eventually become more deeply integrated or assimilated and therefore alienated from their countries of origin, while others may not be able to or do not prefer to engage with their homeland (GRILLO and MAZZUCATO 2008, p. 185). An interviewee corroborates this:

"The more integrated in Austria, the less transnational they are, since their daily lives and direct interests in raising and educating children and buying a home are already in Vienna." (Interview no. 3, Vienna).

In the case of Albanian migrants in Greece, several forms of transnational activities have been observed. A study of KING and VULLNETARI (2009) indicated that the transnational practices of Albanian households in Greece are increasing and there is an emergent transnational social space. At the same time, research by MICHAIL (2009) had shown that proximity with Albania facilitated migrants' transnational investment practices while keeping their connections with family members and places of origin quite strong. It has further been argued that transnational activities of Albanians increasingly denote a strategy of integration as an alternative answer both to the economic and political instability in Albania and to the problematic migration environment in Greece (MICHAIL 2013, p. 266). Recently, however, Albanian migrants in Greece have been going through a new transnational rupture due to repercussions of the economic crisis in relation to their legal and socio-economic status. They are, therefore, neither able to sustain a decent standard of living in Greece nor to create a new and viable livelihood back in Albania, which remains poor and disorganized (KING et al. 2013, p. 137). Therefore, transnational patterns and activities are changing and transnational practices are being modified. Some practices cannot be performed to the extent to which they once were, while others cannot be performed at all (e.g. remittances and investments) (GEMI 2014). In addition, given the liberalisation of visas (introduced in 2010) and the consolidation of long-term resident status along with the increasing access to citizenship, both in Austria and Greece, a new dynamic of transnational space has emerged with transnational movements becoming easier and more fluid.

"Everybody is expecting to take Greek citizenship and immediately leave the country to find better life opportunities abroad. The number of Albanians who were born in Greece or those who came here at a very young age is estimated at 120,000." (Interview no. 7, Athens).

In this sense, transnational practices and activities followed by Albanian migrants situate them within the realm of transnationalism. Transnational transfers however are connected explicitly with patterns of deeper integration/assimilation in Austria vis-à-vis social exclusion³³ in Greece. The questions raised here are, first, in what ways do Albanian migrants resume transnational activities and how do they construct new transnational bridges between countries, since the crisis in Greece (that has caused social exclusion rather than deepening integration) has created a new and different set of transnational engagements? Secondly, does migrants' integration/assimilation in Austria reinforce or deter transnational activities? Is there any trade-off between transnational activities and integration/assimilation? In other words, the more integrated migrants are in their country of settlement, the less transnational they might be and vice versa.

³³ Which, before the economic crisis, was characterized as one-way assimilation.

3.3.1 Economic transnational transfers

To a great degree, Albania relies economically on remittances from migrants. Remittances are seen as the most important financial contribution of migrants to the development of the Albanian economy. This is applied even in Austria, albeit on a much smaller scale than in Greece.

“There is a limited economic transnationalism, it relates only to remittances and small economic aid for the reconstruction of houses.” (Interview no. 3, Vienna).

Remittances have long helped to overcome poverty and for many years continued to make an important contribution to the Albanian economy. Although Albania continues to be heavily dependent on remittances, the inflows gradually declined during the economic crisis in Greece. An interviewee recounts how the lack of remittances has had an impact on the living conditions of families back in Albania:

“Most of the Albanians in Greece used to send money on a monthly basis. With that money, their relatives there built houses and supported the domestic economy [...]. Now, since many Albanian workers can wait for months to get paid for their jobs, if not unemployed, they are not able to remit as they used to.” (Interview no. 15, Athens).

Strengthening contact with family networks in Albania initiates a new and unfamiliar dependency for Albanian migrants particularly in Greece. In some cases, they appear dependent upon family members in Albania to send remittances to them in Greece – the so-called ‘reversed remittances’. In addition, many feel the need to overcome a marginalized socio-economic status caused by the crisis and therefore encounter greater difficulty trying to fulfil goals, such as maintaining affordable and quality education for their children. Attempts to do so have led Albanian families to send a part of their family to Albania.

“There are Albanian families split up in two between Greece and Albania. As the husband was left without any money and job, he decided to return to the family apartment in Tirana with the older son, while the wife continues to work as a house cleaner in Athens, putting in efforts to help her children to move forward with their studies.” (Interview no. 7, Athens).

As the stability of remittance flows is dependent on the migrants’ legal status and position on the labour market, the impact of the financial crisis in Greece along with the decrease in remittance flows qualifies as the main transmission channel of a domino effect within the economy of Albania. In fact, apart from Greece, Albania is the country most affected by the spillovers of the Greek crisis for two reasons. First, as already mentioned, Greece is the most important country for Albanian remittances. Secondly, for Albania, Greece has been and still is the main trade partner and the main country for foreign investments (SADIKU and BERISHA 2014). Conversely, the economic presence and investments of Austrian companies in Albania, especially in banking and in the financial

sector, have increased the transnational mobility of financial capital and human capital (staff), with the latter benefitting from further qualification and employment in both countries:

"The Austrian economic presence in Albania is quite evident and this creates transnational space, as staff can be mobile from one country to another." (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

However, when it comes to Albanian economic transnational activities in Vienna and vice versa, it is found to involve a small, restricted group of persons with specific socio-economic features:

"There are cases of some Albanian businessmen who have brought children and family to Austria to study and in this context have done some business." (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

3.3.1.1 Return

When examining the interconnectedness between integration and transnationalism, it is assumed that return does not constitute the end of a migration cycle, but that it rather is part of a transnational system, which is based on the interconnection of social, cultural and economic relationships cutting across traditional (national) borders. In the recent past, returning to Albania had been considered as an indication of failed integration. During the crisis in Greece, however, return was seen as a strategy for coping with the detrimental impact of the economic crisis on Albanian households (GEDESHI and DE ZWAGER 2012, p. 250). As an interviewee put it:

"From 2008 onwards, with the beginning of the crisis, there was a considerable degree of return. We are talking about a total of 220,000 people returning to Albania since then." (Interview, no. 7, Athens).

Interestingly, the Austrian case represents precisely the opposite scenario. Return is not seen as an option, due to the advantages offered by the Austrian integration system and through economic stability:

"Return, no way [...] Maybe only retirees on a seasonal basis. Here in Austria, the benefits for old age are fantastic. There is a perfect infrastructure for the elderly." (Interview no. 3, Vienna).

Even in cases of a temporary legal status, return is not considered an option. An interviewee explains his approach as follows:

"I don't want to return to Albania. I want to stay in Austria. Here I feel at home and secure, regardless of offensive behaviour [...]. In Albania there is no room for any kind of business development, because if you have an idea and make it reality, a politician would come and take it from you with (a mere) 'because I say so', and then tell you to 'go now', because he/she controlled the market. I would go to work in Albania only if an Austrian company sent me there. If I don't find work in Austria, I will go to Germany." (Interview no. 13, Vienna).

Back in Greece, several interviewees followed multiple geographical paths, and pursued many ventures before taking the decision to return to Albania or to Greece (Interview no. 7, 14, 15, Athens). In some cases, the return decision might reflect weak integration in Greece, or it would be an indication of preparedness for the return scenario. In other cases, the economic crisis might have precipitated the return of those who have completed their project of transferring capital and thus to some extent have satisfied the dream of developing their own venture in Albania.

“Before returning to Albania, some migrants took all their savings from Greece and transferred them to Albania. They had realized that the crisis was approaching and, being afraid of losing them, they transferred their savings in Albania through informal channels. Later on, some of them returned (in 2013 or 2014) and used the money to run their own business or to buy apartments.” (Interview no. 14, Athens).

However, our empirical findings revealed a rupture compromising the capacity for development and business activity, and therefore for furthering goals of upward socio-economic mobility. As an interviewee puts it:

“Returnees are left without visible or viable options. Entrepreneurship initiatives, for instance, are often obstructed by instability and lack of infrastructure, and of re-integration policies for returnees in Albania.” (Interview no. 14, Athens).

For obvious reasons, this is not the case for Albanian migrants in Vienna, even when they have made professional and economic investments:

“I have never thought about return. I go to Albania simply to develop 1-2 professional projects a year as it was with the dance project ‘Exile-Déjà vu’. Austria is my home. The only investment I have made in Albania is buying a summer house by the sea.” (Interview no. 5, Vienna).

Clearly, this study shows that the attitude towards return has primarily been developed through a transnational understanding and evaluation of opportunities in both the home and the host country. As such, the findings offer significant evidence on how return does not constitute the end of a migration cycle, but instead is part of a transnational system, an episode in the process of transnational transfers. The intentions of these transfers are shaped by changing circumstances (e.g., personal experiences or contextual factors in the sending country), and strongly influenced by transnational life opportunities (NADLER et al. 2016, p. 361).

3.3.2 Political transnational activities

One of the key parameters of political transnational activity is that migrants’ political integration in countries of settlement can occur simultaneously with transnational political practices (MARTINIELLO 2005). This happens because opportunity structures that allow certain degrees of participation are shaped by both the receiving country

and the sending country (MÜGGE 2016, p. 116). It is assumed that active transnational political engagement can contribute both to the democratization of the country of origin and to the evolvement of a multi-cultural democracy in the receiving countries (FAIST 2000). In this context, the political opportunity structure (in countries of origin and settlement) as embedded in national integration policies, as well as the citizenship regimes are considered to be the feedback mechanisms through which migrants' political transnational mobility is being shaped (LEVITT et al. 2003, p. 654; BAUBÖCK 2003).

In Greece, migration policies have perpetuated a model of managing migration that has stressed security issues, stricter border controls, and legalization procedures, and had not promoted the real issues related to full integration, access to citizenship and political participation. However, contrary to the citizenship regime in Austria, dual citizenship is recognized in Greece. Following the same line of reasoning, it is assumed that a strong transnational political orientation is a response to exclusionary citizenship regimes (e.g., recognizing or not recognizing dual citizenship) limiting migrants' access to the political community in the host country (KOOPMANS et al. 2005, p. 143). In contrast to this approach, the level of political participation of Albanian migrants both in Albania and in Austria and Greece has been historically very low in reality.

"Albanians have no connection with the political scene in Albania." (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

Meanwhile, as supported by MORAWSKA (2003, p. 161), active political participation in the host society and political engagement in the country of origin are often successfully combined. Again, this approach is applicable neither in Greece, nor in Austria. An interviewee explains that this is due to the homeland's manipulative stance toward political participation in the host country:

"Albanians are out of political developments in Austria. They are greatly indoctrinated by the countries of origin, Albania and Kosovo, and they show no interest for Austrian political life. Homeland political parties play a negative role because they want to control them and thus do not motivate them to participate in Austria." (Interview no. 3, Vienna).

In Greece, on the other hand, the perceived temporary character of migration is restricted to *presence* rather than *participation*. In this context, active civic and political participation as well as the representation of immigrants in mainstream associations like trade unions or political parties has not been facilitated at all (GROPAS and TRIANDAFYLIDOU 2005, p. 4). The main reasons include the insecure legal status, the prolonged immigration policy vacuum, which has reinforced the feeling of mistrust towards the Greek state, and the exclusion, until recently, from access to political rights and citizenship status. Unlike in Austria, where the electoral interest is insignificant, in Greece, the three major Albanian political parties (PS, PD and LSI³⁴) have recently put in significant efforts to engage Albanian migrants in political developments in Albania. It has been estimated that a large number of Albanian migrants living in Greece have

³⁴ Socialist Party, Democratic Party and Socialist Movement for Integration.

travelled to Albania in order to cast their vote in the national election that took place in June 2017. The question raised here is whether this development is perceived as a form of ‘negotiating’ the option of return as a result of the ongoing crisis in Greece, or whether it marked a new historical phase in transnational political participation of Albanian migrants. One of the interviewees supports both notions:

“Albanians went to vote because they believe it could help them to establish social and political ties with the (corrupt) system there. It is seen as a strategy to network and find a work for themselves and their children in Albania, given the precarious situation in Greece.” (Interview no. 15, Athens).

3.3.3 Socio-cultural Transnational Activities

Transnational socio-cultural activities could be viewed in the light of socio-cultural capital that entail ideas, behaviour and identities, feelings of belonging, morality, and cultural codes. It could also be seen as a form of attachment to the country of origin and attachment to, or integration/assimilation in the host country (ENGBERSEN et al. 2013). As our case study demonstrates, the connection between homeland attachment and integration is not mutually exclusive:

“I began establishing professional contacts with Albania in 2013 when my former teacher was appointed director of the Albanian Opera and Ballet Theatre. Then I became a member of the opera board and started performing on the Albanian stage. Albania connects me with my childhood. I am Albanian. I feel Albanian. I miss Albania. The motive behind my activities in Albania is the desire and the need that I feel to offer my contribution to the development of ballet and cultural life in my country. Thus, I aspire that Albania shall not be considered a backward or primitive country. My goal is to transfer the knowledge, experience and technique that I have learned in the West. I usually go to Albania once a year for work reasons and every summer for 5-6 weeks for vacation with my family at a summer house that I have bought years ago.” (Interview no. 5, Vienna).

As illustrated above, integration can go hand in hand with either strong or weak forms of transnationalism, but this category consists mainly of highly educated migrants who work in skilled professions. This approach could also be promoted by pro-active policies in the fields of cultural and educational cooperation between the country of origin and the host country.

“Austria attaches a lot of significance to cultural aspects, for example, they have put forward projects to promote the German language in Albania and to increase the number of German-speaking people.” (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

Conversely, in Greece, de-legalization and exclusion are pondered as an emerging phenomenon in transnationalism. In this sense, transnationalism serves more than just an integrative and reproductive purpose, because exclusion adds a new dimension to the

transnational narrative in which ties are severed and belonging is negotiated. While the first generation attempts to reconcile the rupture caused by having to choose between places – returning to their country of origin, or migrating to a new country – the second generation is struggling with identity. Many of the latter are technically Albanian because it is the origin of their parents, but they were born, raised and socialized according to Greek cultural norms and values. To them Albania means belonging to their parents' homeland while returning to their families' roots (WESSENDORF 2007, p. 1097). However, once in Albania, they feel trapped in a place which they once hoped would be their home, but in which they feel like strangers. Interestingly, as a recent study (GEMI 2015) has shown, a significant number of second-generation migrants of Albanian origin put into question their ethnic attachment to both Greece and Albania. Instead, a cosmopolitan identity seems to prevail.

In conclusion: it has become clear that economic transnationalism requires financial capital, e.g. for remittances or/and investments. Political transnationalism requires political capital in the form of skills, knowledge and contacts in the homeland, while socio-cultural transnationalism requires social capital in the form of social networks (MÜGGE 2016, p. 120). The rationale behind this approach is that migrants who are low on the economic, socio-cultural, or political ladder are supposed to be less likely to engage in transnationalism. As this study shows, the types and forms of transnational activities depend primarily on the level of integration or exclusion in the host country. It also depends on the openness of opportunity structures in the homeland, which is materialized through pro-active diaspora policies. In the case of Albanian migrants in Vienna, it becomes clear that deeper integration/assimilation has led to more limited transnational activities, both in their form and their intensity.

“Not too much transnational mobility. It is limited to occasional or professional interpersonal relationships.” (Interview no. 9, Vienna).

At a national level, transnationalism seems to be significantly related to the inter-EU mobility of migrants, who are used to frequently go back and forth between locations. An interviewee addresses the matter as follows:

“For EU citizens, transnational mobility takes place because of legal facilities, elimination of physical barriers, and geographical proximity. When it comes to third-country nationals being transnational, it becomes more complicated because of legal status, longer distances to countries of origin, and the nature of bilateral relations with the country of origin.” (Interview no. 10, Vienna).

By supporting the idea of assimilation, an interviewee goes a step further and delves into the ideological and political complexities of the ‘Austrian version’ of transnationalism:

“In Austria, transnationalism is seen as a threat. Sebastian Kurz, on a visit to Bosnia, declared that ‘Bosnians should invest in Austria and not in Bosnia’. This is a kind of ‘Austria first’, nationalistic approach.” (Interview no. 11, Vienna).

Despite their commonalities in terms of restrictive citizenship, there are significant differences between the Albanian migration patterns in Austria and Greece. While migration to Greece has been mostly irregular, this is not the case for Austria. The different legislative and policy frameworks have affected migrants' regularization and, subsequently, their level of integration as well as the development of transnational patterns. At the same time, integration of Albanians in the labour market differs significantly between the two countries. Variations are mainly related to differences in access to the educational system, the characteristics of the labour market, and the nature of the opportunity structure. In Greece, some migrants experienced de-skilling and expressed frustration at not being able to enter the education system and enhance their professional qualifications in order to improve their position on the labour market. Likewise, transnational mobility patterns differ across the two countries. One factor that contributes to differences between locations is the matter of regularization and residence permits. In Greece, difficulties with papers have obstructed transnational movements to Albania and other countries. Before the liberalisation of the visa regime in 2010, the Greek authorities had from time to time allowed Albanians to travel home only during holidays. Undoubtedly, such restrictions influenced transnational transfers and transnational family ties of Albanians in Greece (VATHI 2015, p. 127). In fact, the incomplete legislative framework and the persistent refusal to accept the transformation of the country into a pole of attraction for migrants that characterize the first phase of Albanian migration (1991-1998), led to the long-term irregular stay and employment of Albanians, whereby transnational and circular (irregular) movements became the norm. However, certain political developments caused a cascade of events that are related to return, to the increase of transnational/circular mobility, and to the search for other migratory destinations. These developments include the liberalisation of entry visas for Albanian citizens entering the EU, the economic crisis, and the strong tendency of de-regularisation that followed, as well as the uncertain status of the second generation. The result of these developments is the creation of a particular category of migrants that constantly move between two countries. As shown by a recent study (GEMI 2015), the expanding possibility of legal entry into Greece has had the immediate consequence of enhancing the (irregular) transnational /circular mobility patterns for seasonal work. Increased transnational cross-border movements facilitate the mobility of the (by and large unskilled) Albanian labour force between the two countries, and its adaptation to new, even more flexible forms of labour relations because of the pressure exercised by the economic crisis in the labour market, both in Greece and in Albania.

As many studies have revealed, there is a dynamic transnational social space between Albania and Greece (KING and VULLNETARI 2010, p. 26; MAROUKIS 2010), whereas this is not the case for Austria. In this context, the immigrants' legal and socio-economic status has played a crucial role in determining transnational mobility in both countries, as it allows (or does not allow) them to be highly mobile not only geographically, but also occupationally and socially. Now, it is a feature relevant for migrants still living in Greece, a trend going hand in hand with reactive transnationalism. To

counter the risk of downward mobility, Albanian migrants respond to their obstacles by engaging less in immediate socio-economic spheres in Greece and participating more in transnational activities that transcend Greek 'porous borders'. The crisis has thus to a degree encouraged transnational mobility and return migration and has given migrants a renewed dynamism because of decreasing opportunities at their original destination, which therefore made conditions at their point of origin also seem more attractive.

4 Conclusion

Different policy frameworks and institutional arrangements have proved to be important factors affecting the integration and transnational patterns of migrants in Greece and Austria. The two countries differ significantly in terms of political organization, their model of governance, the economic and labour market structure, and migration patterns. Although they are both members of the European Union, Greece is an economically unstable country of the southern EU, recently hit by a dual crisis, both financial and humanitarian (in the form of the recent refugee crisis). It emerged as a destination country at the beginning of the 1990s and hence had little experience in managing migration and integration. Greece and Albania are neighbouring countries sharing common borders (real and imaginary). On the other hand, Austria is an economically and politically stable country with a different migration and integration legacy, representing the North-Western European regime.

In terms of the migration paradigm, the presence of migrants from the Balkans in Austria has been perceived as a revival of the old Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, caused by the guest-worker immigration that started during the 1960s. It is supposed that migrants coming from Balkan countries were highly welcome as members of the labour force in many branches of the Austrian economy, and that they had established social network ties in Austria. Although there are differences, the two countries share some similarities. These similarities can largely be attributed to the large-scale presence of a migrant population from the countries of the Western Balkans, to the existent historical, political, economic and cultural ties with Albania, to their strategic geographical positions on the European map, and to their currently sound presence in the economic and cultural life of Albania.

In both countries, integration policies are particularly stringent, since naturalization is hard to obtain. Despite acknowledging multiculturalism as a permanent feature of their societies, the citizenship regime remains based on the *ius sanguinis* in both countries. In contrast to Greece, where dual citizenship is recognized, migrants in Austria have to renounce their previous nationality, although with certain exceptions. In this vein, naturalization is conceptualized as a 'reward' (JURADO 2008, p. 5) for a migrant's assimilation, rather than as an institutional tool for deepening integration. To this end, both states demand that migrants pass naturalisation tests, including high levels of German and Greek language proficiency and knowledge of the state's history and culture, as well as subscribing to the public values of the states. Furthermore, in Austria the introduction of pre-entry tests has been viewed as a shift towards exclusionary effects in terms of rights and social selectivity (SCHIOCCHE 2017, p. 146). In terms of integration, Albanians seem rather to follow an assimilation trajectory, which is paradoxically coupled with weak bonding and bridging social capital. Interestingly, at individual level the attention is primarily focused on coming as close as possible to the Austrian and Greek social patterns, which means 'hiding' any sort of difference and

preferably becoming 'invisible'. Still, Albanians tend to self-assimilate, which in turn is viewed as an approach of conformity with the existing system of the host countries. Some attribute it to the 'impersonal face' of integration patterns applied in Austria, whereas in Greece it is linked with embedded discrimination.

Considering Greece and Athens, the study reveals that in the absence of any plan or specific local integration policy, migrants have achieved a certain degree of integration by themselves, without any contribution by local government, a process that has been named one-way rather than two-way integration. To put it differently, integration (assimilation) 'happens by accident' as migrants are left to their own devices. This has paved the ground for the emergence of individual strategies, in which some migrants remain attached to their own culture, while others assimilate very quickly and the remainder live in-between cultures.

In Austria, the prevailing integration paradigm promoted by both conservative and social democratic parties is the idea of assimilation (FASSMANN and REEGER 2008, p. 33). Opposing this approach, the city government in Vienna has consistently promoted the idea of cultural diversity and multiculturalism, which are seen as a benefit in Austrian society (ibid.). Contrary to the situation in Greece, the role of Federal laws in Austria is limited to providing a general framework. The remaining actions, including drawing up tailor-made integration measures and policies according to local special needs and conditions, take place in the regions (BIFFL 2017, p. 168).

With regard to transnationalism, different patterns can be identified, which are mostly attributed to different migration governance and welfare regimes, to geographical distances (e.g. proximity between Greece and Albania), labour market priorities, as well as bilateral agreements with Albania. In Greece, difficulties with regularisation have obstructed transnational activities to and from Albania as well as to other countries. Nevertheless, after the introduction of the 6-month window of the seasonal invitation (*metaklisi*) system in 2001, more Albanian migrants followed a more fixed pattern of transnational mobility for seasonal employment reasons (TRIANDAFYLIDOU 2011, p. 13). Meanwhile, relatively recent political developments such as the liberalisation of entry visas for Albanian citizens entering the EU, the economic crisis, and the strong tendency of lapsing into irregularity caused a cascade of events that include the increase of transnational/circular mobility and the search for other migratory destinations. The result of these developments has been the creation of a particular category of migrants that constantly move between two countries. The return and transnational movements for seasonal (often informal) employment in specific sectors of the economy (e.g., agriculture and tourism) is currently the most frequent means by which the transnational migration of Albanians to Greece takes place. The same is true to a lesser degree for the situation in Austria.

At the same time, it has become evident that the current socio-economic situation in which Albanians in Greece find themselves has reversed the process of integration. In fact, de-legalization/disintegration is considered an emerging phenomenon in transna-

tionalism. In this sense, transnationalism serves more than just an integrative and reproductive purpose, because dis-integration adds a new dimension to the transnational narrative in which ties are severed and belonging is negotiated. In this case, dis-integration is another element integral to the concept of transnationalism, also strengthening the explanatory typology of reactive transnationalism. As KOOPMANS et al. (2005, p. 142) supports, the strong transnational orientation may be a response to exclusionary citizenship regimes in host states that limit migrants' access to the political community. In fact, when transnationalism emanates from exclusion in the host society, then there is a negative integration denominator (BIVAND ERDAL and OEPPEN 2013, p. 878).

Table 2: **Typology of causal relation between integration and transnationalism**

Category	Migration pattern	Level of integration/assimilation	Forms of Transnational Activities			
			Austria	Type	Greece	Type
1	Periodic/seasonal/circular	Non-existent or partially existent (limited to host country language)	High level of transnational mobility for irregular seasonal/circular employment in construction and agricultural sectors/high dependency on social/ethnic networks	Linear & partly resource dependent	High level of transnational mobility either to Greece or other EU countries for irregular seasonal – circular employment in tourism, construction and agricultural sectors/high dependency on job offers facilitated by social/ethnic networks	Reactive Transnationalism
2	Temporary	Low to medium level of integration	Medium to low level of transnational mobility; limited to family transfers and studying		Partially existent – to EU countries (Germany, UK) and USA; dependent on age, family composition and social networks; re-migration to EU, USA, Canada	
3	Permanent	Medium to high level/Complete assimilation	Occasional transnational mobility/limited to family transfers and professional projects		High level of transnational mobility including other EU countries. Remigration to other EU countries facilitated by social/ethnic networks.	

Source: Author's compilation.

As this study further indicates, the types and forms of transnational activities depend primarily on the level of integration vis-à-vis exclusion in the host country and

secondly, the openness of opportunity structures in the homeland, which is materialized through pro-active diaspora policies. In the case of Albanian migrants in Vienna, it becomes clear that deeper integration/assimilation has led to the limitation of transnational activities, both in their form and their intensity.

In an attempt to synthesize the findings, this study has identified a typology of causal relation between integration and transnationalism, which is structured around three categories: migration pattern, level of integration/assimilation, and forms of transnational activities.

Concluding, the Austrian paradigm encompasses a more nuanced transnational pattern of Albanian migration. It encapsulates a type of linear transnationalism along with some elements of a resource dependent transnationalism. The first suggests that as integration or assimilation of Albanians in Austria has increased, their transnational activities (if any) have gradually decreased. The second type, on the other hand, implies that financial and human resources are needed for engaging in transnational activities, thereby assuming a positive relationship between integration and transnationalism. Indeed, the transnational transfers of Albanians are mostly related to professional projects and studying of highly skilled individuals. Finally, the Greek paradigm falls within the type of reactive transnationalism. This implies a positive relationship between exclusion (negative integration) and transnationalism, which results from discrimination or a negative experience of integration that migrants face in the host society.

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Annexes I: List of Interviewees – Vienna

a/a	Status/ Capacity	Date of Interview	Language of Interview	Gender (M/F)	Nationality	Employment/ Institution
1	Consul	01/03/2018	Albanian	M	Albanian	Albanian Embassy in Vienna
2	Senior Programme Manager	05/03/2018	Greek	M	Greek	Fundamental Rights Agency
3	Intercultural Mediator	09/03/2018	Albanian	M	Austrian	Municipal Authority of City of Vienna Integration and Diversity Regional Office Süd
4	High School Teacher/Instructor of the History of Religion	09/03/2018	Albanian	M	Albanian	Public High School in Vienna
5	Dancer and Choreographer	20/03/2018	Albanian	M	Austrian	Vienna State Opera
6	Project Manager – Integration Monitoring	28/04/2018	English	F	Austrian	Municipal Department 17 – Integration and Diversity
7	Head of Department for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration	21/3/2018	English	F	Austrian	IOM Country Office for Austria
8	Writer & Translator	12/04/2018	Albanian	M	Austrian	Traduki – European network for literature and books
9	Ambassador	18/04/2018	Albanian	M	Albanian	Albanian Embassy in Vienna
10	Senior Researcher	13/04/2018	English	F	Austrian	ISR – Institute for Urban and Regional Research
11	Senior Research Officer	30/04/2018	English	M	Austrian	ICMPD
12	Student	07/05/2018	Albanian	F	Albanian	Technical University of Vienna
13	Student	20/04/2018	Albanian	M	Albanian	Economic University of Vienna
14	Irregular (seasonal) construction worker	14/05/2018	Albanian	M	Albanian	Austrian Construction Company
15	Cook-roaster	19/05/2018	Albanian	M	Albanian-Greek	Greek restaurant

Annexes II: List of Interviewees – Athens

a/a	Status/ Capacity	Date of Interview	Language of Interview	Gender (M/F)	Nationality	Employment/ Institution
1	Project Managers Development and Tourism Promotion Institute	Jan. 2016	Greek	M & F	Greek	City of Athens
2	Former General Secretary of Population and Migration	Sept. 2015	Greek	M	Greek	Greek Ministry of the Interior – Professor of Philosophy of Law, Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki
3	NGO's President	Feb. 2016	Greek	M	Greek	Migrants' Association ASANTE
4	NGO's Director	March 2016	Greek	F	Greek	MELISSA Womens' Migrant Network
5	Human Rights Lawyer	Sept. 2015	Greek	M	Greek	Diavatrio NGO
6	Human Rights Lawyer	Oct. 2015	Greek	F	Greek	UNHCR Office
7	President	Feb. 2016	Greek	M	Albanian	The Federation of Albanian Associations in Greece
8	Deputy Mayor for the Child	Jan. 2016	Greek	F	Greek	City of Athens
9	President of Reception and Solidarity Centre	Feb. 2016	Greek	F	Greek	City of Athens
10	Director of NGO	Sept. 2015	Greek	F	Greek	DIOTIMA NGO
11	Deputy Mayor of Migration and Integration	Feb. 2016	Greek	M	Greek	City of Athens
12	Head of Statistical Department	Feb. 2016	Greek	M	Greek	City of Athens
13	Deputy Mayor of Social Solidarity, Welfare and Equality	Feb. 2016	Greek	F	Greek	City of Athens, Professor of Gender Studies at the Panteion University
14	Albanian NGO, President	March 2016	Albanian	M	Albanian	AROGI NGO
15	Junior Researcher	Dec. 2016	Greek	M	Albanian	ELIAMEP

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